FACULDADE DE CIÊNCIAS SOCIAIS E HUMANAS
UNIVERSIDADE NOVA DE LISBOA

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Can We Speak?
Approaching Oral Proficiency in the EFL Classroom

Rúben Tiago Medronho Constantino Correia

Tese de Doutoramento em Línguas, Literaturas e Culturas

Área de Especialidade em Didática das Línguas Estrangeiras

(versão corrigida)

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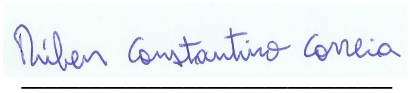
Tese apresentada para cumprimento dos requisitos necessários à obtenção do grau de Doutor em Línguas, Literaturas e Culturas, área de especialidade em Didática das Línguas Estrangeiras, realizada sob a orientação científica de Professor Doutor Carlos Ceia.

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Foreign Language Teaching Methodology, supervised by Professor Carlos Ceia.

DECLARAÇÕES

Declaro que esta tese é o resultado da minha investigação pessoal e independente. O seu conteúdo é original e todas as fontes consultadas estão devidamente mencionadas no texto, nas notas e na bibliografia.

O candidato,



Lisboa, 14 de Abril de 2021

Declaro que esta tese se encontra em condições de ser apreciada pelo júri a designar.

O orientador,

Lisboa, 14 de Abril de 2021

DEDICATÓRIA

Para o meu avô Júlio e minha esposa Patrícia, os quais, cada um à sua maneira, me deram a força que precisei para terminar esta jornada.

DEDICATION

For my grandfather Júlio and my wife Patrícia, who, each on their own terms, gave me the strength I needed to finish this journey.

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RESUMO

A oralidade tem vindo a ser progressivamente promovida em programas e currículos, tanto nacional como internacionalmente, como um dos grandes objetivos do ensino da língua estrangeira. No entanto, as características únicas desta competência fazem de si a mais difícil de abordar em contextos de sala de aula. Apesar de toda a relevância dada à oralidade, bem como a todos os seus constituintes na maioria dos documentos oficiais nacionais e internacionais, como as novas metas de Inglês para Portugal, as Aprendizagens Essenciais e o Quadro Comum de Referência para as Línguas (QECR), os professores portugueses parecem debater-se para conseguirem aplicar procedimentos adequados para desenvolverem tais competências na sua plenitude. Assim, este projeto inclui uma análise da teoria e da prática do ensino da língua inglesa nas salas de aula portuguesas, considerando a abordagem à oralidade no geral e à inteligibilidade em particular. Na realidade, o conceito de inteligibilidade está hoje firmemente enraizado na área da linguística aplicada como um dos fatores determinantes para explicar o sucesso, ou não, da comunicação entre interlocutores de diferentes origens culturais e linguísticas.

Este estudo está dividido em duas partes distintas, uma primeira parte de cariz teórico e uma segunda parte de cariz prático. Nos capítulos da parte 1 são postos criticamente em perspetiva os conceitos globalização, comunicação e mudança, como base para uma reflexão acerca dos fatores históricos e antropológicos mais influentes para a disseminação e estatuto da língua inglesa. O foco é então direcionado para o papel do Inglês na Europa, bem como em Portugal,

atendendo aos contextos de ensino-aprendizagem de ambos para irem ao encontro das necessidades linguísticas dos alunos coevos. Numa tentativa de clarificar os complexos desenvolvimentos da língua, este estudo examina os fundamentos que subjazem a conceitos-chave de proficiência linguística em ambiente educacional, assim como as premissas teóricas que os norteiam. Logo, serão igualmente reavaliadas algumas das compartimentações habituais no mundo anglófono, de acordo com a mudança do "centro de gravidade" que está a ocorrer no uso da língua inglesa. Como afirmado, a parte 2 do estudo é eminentemente prática. O plano e o método através dos quais o estudo se desenvolveu são apresentados, detalhando-se a abordagem metodológica da investigação em relação à informação quantitativa e qualitativa recolhida (questionários / observações em sala de aula / entrevistas / gravações áudio). O propósito é perceber o que está a ser feito pelos professores em sala de aula em termos de oralidade e quão inteligíveis são os alunos de inglês do 9º ano de escolaridade. A partir da informação recolhida, é feita uma análise dos resultados mais pertinentes, que por sua vez conduzirá às implicações e conclusão do estudo. Estas duas últimas secções discutem os potenciais efeitos dos resultados obtidos no processo ensino-aprendizagem da oralidade e a sua influência na inteligibilidade dos alunos, enquanto falantes e ouvintes.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Inglês Língua Estrangeira, Oralidade, Proficiência Linguística, Inteligibilidade, Aprendizagem

ABSTRACT

Speaking has been increasingly promoted in language syllabuses and curriculums, both nationally and internationally, as one of the major aims of foreign language teaching. However, the unique features of this skill make it the most challenging one to address in classroom-based contexts. Despite the conspicuous importance given to speaking and all its subsets in most national and international official documents, new English targets for Portugal, the subject's core curriculum and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), Portuguese teachers seem to be at odds with suitable procedures to fully develop them inside the classroom. Thus, this project entails an analysis of the theory and practice of classroom English language teaching (ELT) in Portugal concerned with speaking in general and intelligibility in particular. Indeed, the concept of intelligibility is now firmly established in the field of applied linguistics as one of the key factors in explaining success or otherwise in communication between interlocutors from cultural and linguistic diverse backgrounds.

This study is divided in two overarching parts, part 1 is a more theoretical one, whereas part 2 is a more practical one. Throughout the chapters of part 1 globalization, communication and change are critically put into perspective, laying the foundation for a reflection on the most significant historical and anthropological factors for English's global spread and current status. The focus is then narrowed down to the role of English in Europe and further on in Portugal, bearing in mind the language learning and teaching contexts of these settings to meet the needs of students' present-day reality. In order to shed greater light on these complex language developments, this study examines the rationale underlying some of the core concepts on educational language proficiency, including their definitions and key characteristics, as well as outlining the theoretical premises on which they are grounded. Thus, traditional divides in the English-speaking world are here re-examined in accordance with the change taking place in the 'centre of gravity' of the English language. As stated, part 2 of the study is eminently practical. The design and methods on which the study is carried out are delineated, detailing the research methodological approach of quantitative and qualitative data collection (questionnaires / classroom observations / semi-structured interviews / audio

recordings). The goal is to understand what teachers do inside their classrooms in terms of speaking ability, as well as how intelligible 9th grade English students are. From the set of gathered data stems an analysis of the major findings, which in turn lead to the implications and conclusion of the study. These two last sections discuss the potential effect of the findings to the teaching and learning of speaking and its influence on the students' intelligibility, either as speakers or listeners.

KEYWORDS: English as a Foreign Language, Speaking, Speaking Proficiency, Intelligibility, Learning

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Abbreviations

APPI	Portuguese Association of English Teachers
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
CALP	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CEFR – CV	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – Companion Volume
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CLES	Comprehensive Law on the Education System
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
COLT	Communication Orientation of Language Teaching
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
EFL	English as Foreign Language
EIL	English as an International Language
ELC	English Language Complex
ELF	English as a Lingua Franca
ELP	European Language Portfolio
ELT	English Language Teaching
ENL	English as a Native Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
EU	European Union
FL	Foreign Language
FLCAS	Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Sale
FLT	Foreign Language Teaching
GA	General American
IBDP	International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme
ICC	Intercultural Communicative Competence
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
IRF	Initiation-Response-Follow-up
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LACE	Languages and Cultures in Europe
MAE	Mid-Atlantic English

NEST	Native English-Speaking Teacher
NNEST	Non-Native English-Speaking Teacher
NNS	Non-Native Speaker
NS	Native Speaker
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCA	Principled Communicative Approach
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPP	Presentation-Practice-Production
RP	Received Pronunciation
SCI	Scientific Citation Index
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TBL	Task-Based Learning
TL	Target Language
TPR	Total Physical Response
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
WSSE	World Standard Spoken English

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Part 1: Theoretical Overview

I – Setting the Scene

I. 1 – Introduction

Learning a foreign language, as a rule, is seen by experts (anthropologists, sociologists and professors/teachers) as a major asset for global understanding and the mobility of people. English is found at the top of the pyramid as the number one language to achieve these goals. Nowadays being able to express oneself intelligibly in English is decisive for students who want to thrive both academically and professionally. Indeed, the concept of intelligibility is now firmly established in the field of applied linguistics as one of the key factors in explaining success or otherwise in communication between interlocutors from cultural and linguistic diverse backgrounds.

Speaking has been increasingly promoted in language syllabuses and curriculums, both nationally and internationally, as one of the major aims of foreign language teaching (FLT). However, the unique features of this skill make it the most challenging one to address in classroom-based contexts (see section II. 5). Despite the conspicuous importance given to speaking and all its subsets in most national and international official documents, new English targets for Portugal and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), Portuguese teachers seem to be at odds with suitable procedures to fully develop them inside the classroom. If Samuda's concerns back in 1993 are updated the teaching of oral skills continue to "claim the dubious title of "most likely to fall between the cracks" and to "find its niche within a communicative curriculum […]" (p. 757) very difficult. Also, in the early 1990s, Brown concluded that "…pronunciation has sometimes been referred to as the 'poor relation' of the English language teaching (ELT) world. It is an aspect of language which is often given little attention, if not completely ignored, by the teacher in the classroom" (1991, p. 1). In a similar fashion, over a decade later, Derwing and Munro equate Brown's words. For these researchers, "the study of pronunciation has been marginalized within the field of applied linguistics. […] Although some instructors can successfully assist their students under these conditions, many others are reluctant to teach pronunciation" (2005, p. 379).

The question must, then, be asked – Why are the teachers reluctant to address speaking and its constituents in the same manner they do reading, listening and writing? Perhaps, the answer can be found within the several studies conducted mainly in English-speaking countries about the reasons that lie underneath this phenomenon – United Kingdom (Burgess & Spencer, 2000), Canada (Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011), USA (Murphy, 1997) and Australia (Macdonald, 2002). All of them share one major common finding on why speaking is not taught in a systematic, planned way. Most teachers seem to avoid exercising oral skills due to lack of confidence – they themselves received very little professional preparation as undergraduates and even after their initial training it remained sporadic. The outcome is a general sense of difficulty to approach speaking and its subsets (focus given here to pronunciation), even when learners are struggling. Such teaching pattern conflicts with the learners' academic and/or professional needs, at present and in the near future. Indeed, as discussed in-depth in the second chapter, recent research (De Jong, Steinel, Florijn, Schoonen, & Hulstijn, 2012, p. 8) shows that pronunciation is the subset to contribute the most to overall ability for low proficiency scores. But the importance of intelligibility is not entirely new. If we go back to 1996 and ever further to 1977, Pennington and Subtelny, respectively, considered it: a) the most crucial aim in pronunciation teaching, and b) the most crucial indicator of spoken communicative competence.

In this context, the role of second language (L2)[1] teachers is fundamental for the stimulus speaking appears to need since "their actions, reflecting their attitudes and abilities, are a most important part of the environment for language learning/acquisition" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 144). Developing speaking proficiency in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom is a difficult, time-consuming, and complex task, yet necessary because speaking is the core of teaching-learning interaction. EFL teachers in Portugal must overcome their frailties regarding the spoken language and commit themselves to promoting learning in a more effective manner. Hopefully, this study may draw Portuguese EFL

[1] In applied linguistics' literature, especially in the United States, L2 is a widely used acronym to designate the learning of English as a Second Language (ESL). The term refers to students whose mother tongue is not English but live and learn it in countries where English is the first language. Nevertheless, in this thesis L2 is used as a shorthand to account for any language(s) acquired in addition to one's mother tongue.

teachers' attention to possible innovative approaches for oral proficiency in their language classrooms, rooted in the present-day function of English around the world, thus, contributing to help them to become more effective teachers.

On a personal note, bearing in mind my role as both researcher and teacher with a vested interest in speaking and its intelligibility subset, a potential researcher bias must be acknowledged. My perceptions of EFL spoken teaching and learning and the context where it operates are shaped by my personal values, assumptions and experiences. Thus, even though every effort will be made to safeguard objectivity, I may bring certain biases to the study which may unwillingly shape my view of the data collected.

I. 1.1 – Study's Aims and Significance

The essence of this study lies in the analysis of the communicative teaching practices of EFL teachers in Portugal and how they reflect on the students' speaking ability and/or intelligibility. Apparently, English continues to be taught with little regard to its real-world use, creating a gap between the students' needs/expectations and their true learning. The considerations presented thus far have critically shaped the central questions of this study:

- How are speaking and intelligibility being addressed in Portugal's L2 classrooms?
- Are speaking and intelligibility truly a neglected party in the Portuguese EFL classroom?
- If so, "How should learners be expected/required to develop their ability to [speak and] pronounce a language?" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 153)

From a foreign language (FL) didactics perspective, I want to grasp which practices are taking place at school, what the major constraints to implementing learning-oriented speaking/pronunciation tasks are and how do the key interlocutors (teachers and students) feel when coping with such tasks, having as barometer the curriculum targets for English in Portugal, first approved in 2013 and later updated in 2015, the 2018 "*Aprendizagens Essenciais*" (subject's core

curriculum) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001 and 2018).

Considering Portugal's distinctive history, in addition to its internal linguistic topography, this study aims at capturing local factors often dismissed in widespread global theories. Furthermore, another aim of the study is to contribute to redressing the imbalance either in speaking or intelligibility research by targeting younger learners. The focus of my research is 9th grade students (around 14 years old) from Portuguese public schools. The choice for this cohort has four justifications. First, the study would not be feasible if the scope of participants were too large in number and schooling. Second, the 9th grade marks the end of Basic Education in Portugal, which till recently was the compulsory school attendance in the country. In Portuguese (educational)society, the 9th grade is thought of as the first benchmark amongst students. Recognisably, those who perform best at this stage are likely to continue to do so during their secondary years and even at university. Third, this is the last school year with English as a compulsory subject for every single student, under the same circumstances. When starting secondary education (10th grade), students choose one of four main study areas[2], which in turn have compulsory and optional subjects, foreign languages fall under the scope of the latter. At this stage, it is the students' choice to keep on learning English as a first foreign language, to keep on learning a second foreign language (usually Spanish or French, started at the 7th grade), or even to start a different foreign language (for instance German, depending on the school's availability). My point is: the variables would be too many to account for if secondary students were to be included in the study, especially the possible uneven number of years of EFL school attendance amongst participants and the distortion it could cause on the data gathered. Fourth, according to the English targets in Portugal (Bravo, Duarte, & Cravo, *Metas Curriculares de Inglês Ensino Básico: 2º e 3º Ciclos*, 2013), students in the 9th grade must become independent users (threshold level) in line with the CEFR standards. The

[2] Students may also choose to attend Professional Courses, according to their interests and schools' availability. EFL teaching/learning in these courses has many discrepancies among them – number of weekly hours, contents, depth, to name just a few of the more salient ones. Therefore, they will not be considered in this study. Perhaps, future research on this topic would create added value on ELT and learning.

correspondence between school year and CEFR's global proficiency scales is the following:

2nd Cycle	5th Grade	A1	Basic User – Breakthrough
	6th Grade	A1+	
3rd Cycle	7th Grade	A2	Basic User – Waystage
	8th Grade	A2+	
	9th Grade	B1	Independent User – Threshold

Table 1 – Correlation between School Year and CEFR's Global Scales

As independent users (threshold level), students, for overall spoken production, "can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 58), whilst for overall spoken interaction "can enter unprepared into conversation on familiar topics, express personal opinions and exchange information on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 74). In light of these considerations, tied with the research questions stated above, the 9th grade should be the outset for an extensive use of the target language (TL) in the classroom, as the preferred medium of communication between students-students and students-teacher. With this proficiency level in mind (B1 – threshold level), a different language teaching approach may fall short of both Portuguese targets and CEFR standards.

Such a choice is significant by representing a challenge to the dominant paradigm of speaking proficiency and intelligibility research, whose scope of investigation has largely been, if not completely, young adult or adult learners at tertiary education. It could, then, be argued that young learners may have been overlooked by the researchers of this field of study. Even junior researchers enrolled in master's and doctoral programmes worldwide[3] about FLT tend to use older participants in their projects. Besides, they also concentrate their focus on Reading and/or Writing. A search under the theme of speaking, or any of its subsets, reveals a lack of comprehensive studies on oral proficiency[4]. Referring to intonation, Levis

[3] The database used as source was *ProQuest*, formerly known as Digital Dissertations (https://about.proquest.com/libraries/academic/dissertations-theses/).

[4] Exception made for Canada and Australia, which are the only two countries that show a rooted interest in further understanding the multitude of aspects intertwined with speaking.

claims that research for this subset "is almost completely divorced from modern language teaching", resulting in teaching materials with "outdated and inaccurate descriptions of intonational forms and functions" (Levis, 1999, p. 37).

In the same vein, Portugal's meagre corpus[5] of master's and doctoral programmes on ELT focuses predominantly on Reading/Writing. To date there are no doctoral thesis concerned specifically with speaking or any of its subsets. There is an obvious lack of attention of Portuguese scholars and teachers on such a prominent subject matter in FL teaching/learning. This is quite surprising considering the growing importance of oral ability in language syllabuses, curriculums, and educational policies in the country. In fact, narrowing the scope to the concept of intelligibility, my search traced only two projects where it is mentioned and addressed with some depth: *Teaching and Learning English as an International Language in Portugal: Policy, practice and perceptions* (Guerra, 2005) and *English as a Lingua Franca: Bridging the gap between theory and practice in English language teaching* (Cavalheiro, 2015). Yet neither of them has intelligibility as the core concept of the study. The former's cornerstone is the use of English as an International Language (EIL) by analysing teachers and students' views and perceptions of EIL, whilst the latter concentrates on pre-service teacher education programmes combined with teacher trainee's opinions on English language and ELT.

As the first project of its kind in the Portuguese context, it represents a step forward to fill the gap in this research area. For now, it seems that speaking proficiency and intelligibility as core concepts of investigation are limited to this study. Hopefully, I may contribute to light the fuse on ELT research and debate around the two in a country where both are startlingly insufficient. Bearing in mind the review made above, this study may even promote a wider debate amongst ELT practitioners and applied linguists in Europe and other parts of the world. "Despite their social and cultural uniqueness, many European countries may share similar pedagogical approaches to teaching English as a foreign language due to the educational guidelines set forth by the Council of Europe" (Guerra, 2005, p. 5), face

[5] The database used as source was RCAAP – Portugal's Open Access Scientific Repository (www.rcaap.pt).

identical practical problems and share some common concerns. Recently, in the executive summary of the English Proficiency Index (Education First, 2015), which attempts to rank countries by the average level of English language skills, it is stated that the most pressing change to be implemented in ELT lies in communicative teaching practices.

Apart from influencing the academic world, this project sets out to achieve important practical outcomes, grounded in its findings. There is a big expectation that it can be seen as a learning tool for L2 teachers, particularly in Portugal, but also abroad. An educational instrument capable of exerting positive influence and raising self-awareness amongst professionals, thus, encouraging effective pedagogical practice changes regarding speaking/intelligibility, "not by offering definitive answers to pedagogical questions, but rather by providing new insights into the teaching and learning process" (McKay, 2006, p. 1). A possible reconceptualization of FL didactics was the most significant incentive to explore this domain of Second Language Acquisition (SLA).

I. 1.2 – Thesis Structure

This study is divided in two overarching parts, part 1 is a more theoretical one, whereas part 2 is a more practical one. Throughout the chapters of part 1 globalization, communication and change are critically put into perspective, laying the foundation for a reflection on the most significant historical and anthropological factors for the global spread and current status of English. The focus is then narrowed down to the role of English in Europe and further on in Portugal, bearing in mind the language learning and teaching contexts of these settings to meet the needs of students' present-day reality. In order to shed greater light on these complex language developments, this study examines the rationale underlying some of the core concepts on educational language proficiency, including their definitions and key characteristics, as well as outlining the theoretical premises on which they are grounded. Thus, traditional divides in the English-speaking world are here re-examined in accordance with the change taking place in the 'centre of gravity' of the English language.

Chapter I sets up a frame of reference to better situate readers of the project on the topic studied, as well as call attention to its aims and significance. In addition, the diffusion stages of English worldwide are analysed from two perspectives: a historical one – the diasporas, and a sociolinguistic one – Kachru's concentric circles of World Englishes, McArthur's circle of World English and Modiano's centripetal circles of International English. Next, I set forth the evolution and use of English in mainland Europe, considering the Modern Foreign Languages paradigm as opposed to the World Englishes paradigm. The final part of the chapter looks at the presence of English in Portugal, particularly in the Portuguese educational system. There is an emphasis on how EFL has evolved at primary and lower secondary public schools across the country.

Chapter II, as suggested by its title, focuses on a reconceptualization of speaking by introducing the notion of intelligibility with a World Englishes frame of mind under the ELF paradigm; thus, challenging traditional views over language ownership and native-like proficiency goals for non-native students of English. Yet the chapter opens with a brief historical outline of the most relevant approaches to FL teaching in the twentieth century to provide a background for contemporary practices in ELT, namely Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), "whose ramifications continue to be felt today" (Richards & Rodgers, Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching, 2001, p. 151). As native speakers (NS) are no longer the sole custodians of English, the chapter moves on to address issues of non-nativeness and (inter)cultural awareness. Finally, the key contours of the terrain of speaking are examined – the nature of speaking itself, the assessment of speaking, speaking's affective variables (anxiety), speaking beyond the classroom and the intelligibility principle of speaking.

In order to complement the theoretical overview of part 1, part 2 of the study is eminently practical. The design and methods on which the study is carried out are delineated, detailing the research methodological approach of quantitative and qualitative data collection (questionnaires / semi-structured interviews / audio recordings). The goal is to understand what teachers do inside their classrooms in terms of speaking ability, as well as how intelligible 9th grade English students are. From the set of gathered data stems an analysis of the major findings, which in turn

lead to the implications and conclusion of the study. These two last sections discuss the potential effect of the findings to the teaching and learning of speaking and its influence on the students' intelligibility, either as speakers or listeners.

Chapter III covers the adopted approaches to investigate the research questions that shape this study, explaining the reasons for the ones used from the available corpus. Based on the chosen approaches, this is followed by a reflection on the suitability of the selected data collection instruments for the study. Bearing in mind the pedagogic centeredness of this research, the chapter continues with a thorough description of the participants involved and the context they operate in. Chapter III finishes with the series of steps taken to do the research – usage, design, practical implementation and limitations of the data collection instruments.

Chapter IV is largely an analysis of the data gathered throughout the school year in which the research took place and how these relate to the research questions. The results of the questionnaires, interviews and audio recordings are here presented and discussed in a tripartite fashion, considering the scope of the study's investigation: a) the role of speaking and intelligibility in Portugal's L2 classrooms, b) the current status of speaking and intelligibility in the Portuguese EFL classroom, c) how the ability to speak and pronounce English intelligibly are being developed amongst Portuguese students. This chapter is, then, a window that allows readers to look at the byzantine reality of real Portuguese language learning classrooms with real learners and real teachers.

The thesis closes with an overall conclusion based on the work undertaken in the preceding chapters. The most pertinent findings of the study are here readdressed and discussed. The possible pedagogical implications that these findings may have for Portuguese EFL students and teachers are also reflected upon. Hopefully, these considerations, either positive or negative, will have an impact inside the classroom so as to facilitate learning. Lastly, some suggestions for possible areas for further research in this domain are made.

I. 2 – English(es) Today

Since the aftermath of World War II, the spread of English worldwide has continued to grow. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Crystal (2003, p. 69) estimated a total of 1,5 million speakers of different origins, approximately 400 million of first language users, 350 million of second language users and 750 million of foreign language users. Right at this point, two remarks must be made. First, NNS (non-native speakers) clearly outnumber NS. Combined together, the ratio between the two latter groups and the former is roughly 3:1. Second, estimates may vary depending on the claimer's (political) agenda, but the main point is that English has both expanded in number and territory for the last decades and perhaps will continue to do so. Yet some researchers offer different perspectives, as is the case of Graddol (1997), who pointed out several possible reasons for the decline of English usage in the near future, claiming that "the current global wave of English may lose momentum" (p. 60). Although recognizing Graddol's rationale, it can be argued that for the time being the status and position of English across the world is undeniable. In fact, while strong predictions about language use are difficult to make given the complexity of factors which surround it (demography, global commerce, media and technology, just to name a few), a major shift in hierarchy seems improbable in a foreseeable future. Thus, my concern, reflected in my research questions, is then if Portuguese EFL learners' communicative, mainly oral, needs are being met. Crystal (2003) goes further to suggest that it may prove impossible to stop the globalization of English, "or even influence its future", because it "has already grown to be independent of any form of social control" (p. 190). All in all, a language hinges on "the historical and structural conditions for its maintenance and use, on the social conditions of its institutionalization, on the symbolic value attached to it and to its users, and the support mechanisms available for its development, enrichment and promotion" (Dendrinos, Karavanta, & Mitsikopoulou, 2008, p. 1).

The diffusion of English around the world may easily be associated to the diasporas. In *The Handbook of World Englishes*, four diasporas are suggested by the editors (Kachru, Kachru, & Nelson, 2006) – the first diaspora took place within the UK (United Kingdom), where local languages and/or dialects in Wales, Ireland and Scotland were replaced by English; the second diaspora marks the beginning of

British (post)colonialism across the Atlantic and the Pacific. Both in the USA (United States of America) and Australia and New Zealand, English thrived through a process of linguistic and cultural appropriation. The third diaspora moved English to completely different linguistic, cultural and social settings, South and Southeast Asia, South America, Africa, Caribbean and mainland Europe, which "entailed teaching and learning English in multilingual situations with genetically and culturally unrelated […] language contexts" (Kachru, Kachru, & Nelson, 2006, p. 3). The fourth diaspora transplanted English even farther to such distinct places as China, Brazil, or Russia, where it is used as a shared common code for international communication. It seems, then, as noted by Graddol, that

> Britain's colonial expansion established the pre-conditions for the global use of English, taking the language from its island birthplace to settlements around the world. The English language has grown up in contact with many others, making it a hybrid language which can rapidly evolve to meet new cultural and communicative needs (1997, p. 5).

The historical overview of English's spread worldwide depicts how it came to be in its current status, both in sheer number and diversity. The settlement of the language in different sociological, linguistic, pedagogical, and ideological contexts opened the gateway for new hybrid forms of English, as well as a set of new labels for the language itself and its speakers, according to their origins.

Speakers from countries within the first and second diasporas are considered NS or L1 speakers. For these, English is their first, and more often than not only, language[6]. Speakers from countries of the third diaspora, namely ex-colonies of the British Empire (Singapore, India, Nigeria), where English holds a special status are considered second language (L2) speakers. In these countries, English is a joint official language together with the respective native idiom mostly used in the educational system, commerce, media, legal system and government's

[6] Nowadays most of these countries experience an increasing linguistic diversity because of immigration. The USA is a paramount example of such novelty, where English is used alongside other languages (Mandarin, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and so forth) daily.

(inter)national affairs[7]. Such multilingual contexts tend to display a hierarchy amongst languages, often based in status. Thus, when ranked against national and regional language(s), English seems to have the upper hand.

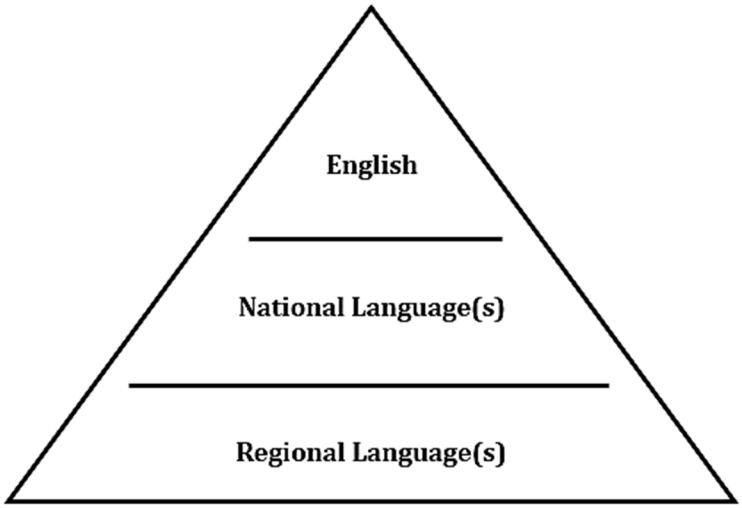

Figure 1 – Language Hierarchy in Postcolonial Regions

Figure 1, adapted from Melchers and Shaw (2011, p. 135), shows a common linguistic scenario in postcolonial countries – English has the prominent position at the top of the pyramid, followed by the territory's native language and finally at the last layer the rather discredited local languages. Lastly, speakers from regions targeted in the third (non-colonized countries – mainland Europe, for instance) and fourth diasporas are viewed as FL speakers. Here, English does not play any governmental role and has no official status, it is learnt at schools and used as a means to communicate with people from different linguistic backgrounds. This is why I advocate that the concept of intelligibility should be a priority in FL schooling. While employed widely across the world to label distinct groups of English users, this three-way categorisation veils important aspects to be taken into consideration, because of the language's globalisation. McArthur (1998, pp. 43-46) lists six of these aspects, from which I highlight and summarize three:

1. There is not one single standard of English. The language varies from country to country (e.g., the USA and the UK) and sometimes even within

[7] The exception is Malaysia, whose government's policies replaced English for Malay as the sole official language, even though English kept its domain in the business sector (Melchers & Shaw, 2011, p. 135).

the same territory (e.g., African American English and "mainstream American English");

2. English may often be used blended with another language – code mixing, or back and forth with another language – code switching;
3. This categorisation establishes a basic division between NS and NNS of English, hinting a superiority of the first group over the second.

Another way to best capture the global spread of English is Kachru's (1985) framework of concentric circles, based on a tripartite group division amongst speakers widely known as "Inner Circle", "Outer Circle" and "Expanding Circle" (p. 12):

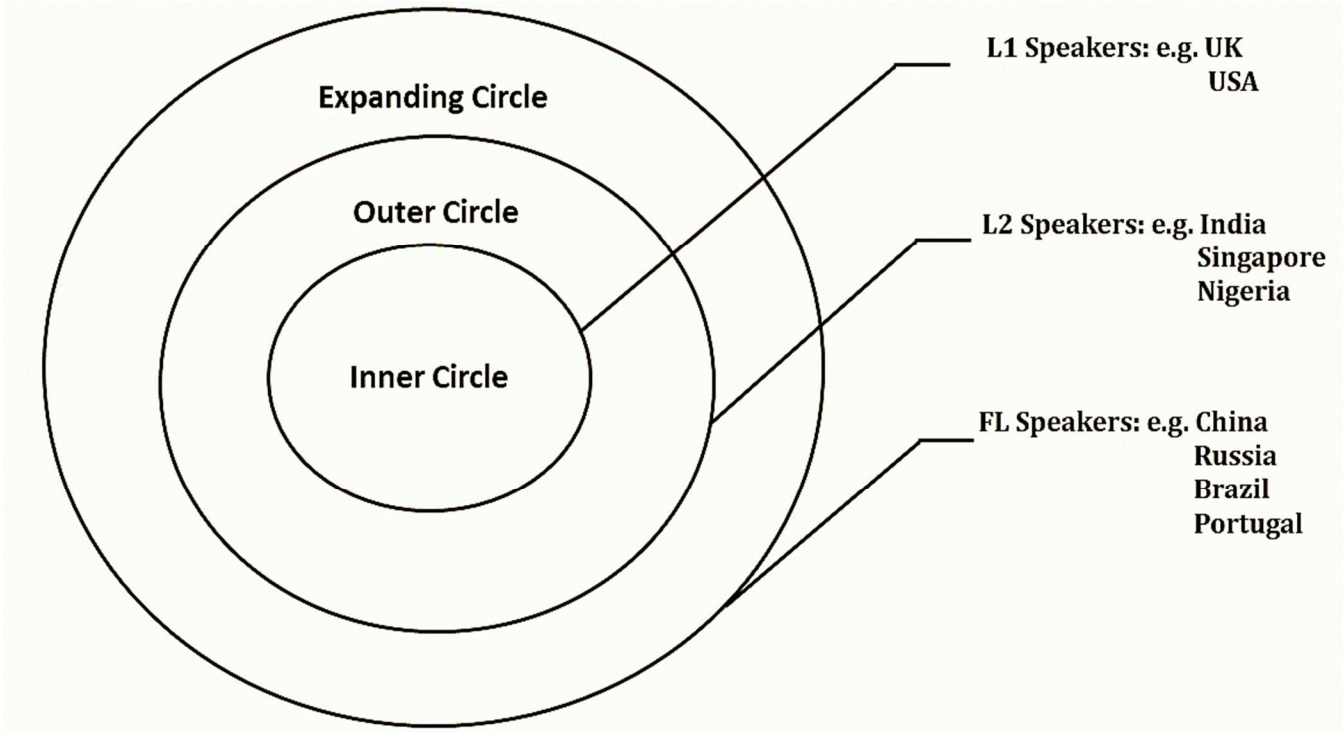

Figure 2 – Kachru's Concentric Circles of World Englishes (adapted)

The "Inner Circle" is made of NS of English, the "Outer Circle" consists of second language speakers of English and the "Expanding Circle" represents the ever-growing number of FL English speakers. Kachru's model has helped many scholars, me included, to understand the patterns of English acquisition across the world. Furthermore, it is a useful sociolinguistic representation of the language's spread and functional purposes in diverse contexts, what Kachru addresses as RANGE.

Table 2, from Kachru (2001, p. 46), profiles the functional range of English in the three circles:

Function	Inner Circle	Outer Circle	Expanding Circle
Access Code	+	+	+
Advertising	+	+ / -	+ / -
Corporate Trade	+	+	+
Development	+	+ / -	+ / -
Government	+	+ / -	-
Linguistic Impact	+	+	+
Literary Creativity	+	+	+ / -
Literary Renaissance	+	+	+
News Broadcasting	+	+	+ / -
Newspapers	+	+	+ / -
Scientific Higher Education	+	+	+ / -
Scientific research	+	+	+ / -
Social Interaction	+	+ / -	+ / -

Table 2 – Functions of English in the Three Circles

+ Use in the domain; **-** No use in the domain; **+ / -** Use of English alongside other languages in the domain (legend added, not in the original).

Therefore, as the language users expand, it can be expected that functions of English will vary and expand too to accommodate innovative uses in new domains. Ironically, it is the increasing range of English that offers the biggest challenges to the Kachruvian model. Despite its influence, several academics from the World Englishes paradigm – Graddol (2006), Mesthrie (2008), Pennycook (2006) and Seidlhofer (2002), to name but a few – point out some limitations concerning the global changes in English language use and the rather static compartmentalisation of English uses and users. Jenkins (2009b, pp. 20-21) amalgamates the main concerns raised by these scholars, and herself, as follows:

- The model is based on geography and genetics rather than on the way speakers identify with and use English. Some English users in the Outer Circle speak it as their first language […]. Meanwhile an increasing number of speakers in the Expanding Circle use English for a very wide range of purposes including social, with native speakers and even more frequently with other non-native speakers from both their own and different L1s, and both in their home country and abroad […];
- There is often a grey area between the Inner and Outer Circles: in some Outer Circle countries, English may be the first language learnt for many people, and may be spoken in the home rather than purely for official purposes such as education, law and government;
- There is also an increasingly grey area between the Outer and Expanding Circles. Approximately twenty countries are in transition from EFL to ESL status, including: Argentina, Belgium, Costa Rica, Denmark, Sudan, Switzerland […];
- Many World English speakers grow up bilingual or multilingual, using different languages to fulfil different functions in their daily lives. This makes it difficult to describe any language in their repertoire as L1, L2, L3 and so on;
- There is a difficulty in using the model to define speakers in terms of their proficiency in English. A native speaker may have limited vocabulary and low grammatical competence while the reverse may be true of a non-native speaker. The fact that English is somebody's second or third language does not of itself imply that their competence is less than that of a native speaker;
- The model implies that the situation is uniform for all countries within a particular circle whereas this is not so. Even within the Inner Circle, countries differ in the amount of **linguistic diversity** they contain […]. In the Outer Circle, countries differ in a number of respects such as whether English is spoken only by an élite […] or is widespread […]; or whether it

is spoken by a single L1 group leading to one variety of English […], or by several different L1 groups leading to several varieties[8] of English […];

- Finally, the term 'Inner Circle' implies that speakers from the ENL [English as a Native Language] countries are central to the effort, whereas their world-wide influence is in fact in decline.

Kachru (2005)[9] refutes his critiques point by point claiming that they are "constructed primarily on misrepresentations of the model's characteristics, interpretations and implications" (p. 220). Kachru himself, as pointed out by Graddol, has "recently proposed that the 'inner circle' is now better conceived of as the group of highly proficient speakers of English" (2006, p. 110). In fact, Graddol (ibid.) strongly advocates proficiency as the benchmark to distinguish between English speakers. Like Graddol, I too think that degree of proficiency, alongside with intelligibility, is perhaps the most appropriate way to approach English and its speakers at present, irrespective of how they learnt the language. In a similar fashion, in the early 1990s, Rampton (1990) challenged the dichotomy native vs. non-native speaker by suggesting the term language expert to refer to the expertise of a user of the language.

Discussions on who is right or wrong go beyond the scope of this study. Based on both sides' arguments, it is up to each researcher and/or teacher to find his/her own path. I acknowledge Kachru's seminal approach to English language use, though not without its problems, which are not that surprising if we are to consider English's globalisation. Yet I would bring to the fore the concept of *speech community*[10], which acquired a special status in pedagogical applied linguistics literature as the "norm" for an ideal speaker/listener. Although changed to *speech fellowship* by Kachru (1985) to reflect the distinct differences and shared characteristics of English users, the model still echoes the underlying normative linguistic sense of *speech community*. The "Inner Circle" varieties are presented as norm-providing, i.e., models that determine the language's standards; the "Outer Circle" varieties are presented as norm-developing; in other words, nativized

[8] Widely used term throughout Applied Linguistics literature, seemingly harmless, which, in my opinion, should be looked at with caution (see next section).
[9] Kachru's rebuttal targets the first edition of Jenkins's book written in 2003.
[10] Group of speakers who share a language in compliance with its rules, standards and norms.

varieties developing their own endonormative standards; the "Expanding Circle" varieties are presented as norm-dependent; put another way, varieties dependent on exonormative standards set by one or more (e.g., UK and/or USA) "Inner Circle" varieties, as the former are thought of "performance" varieties with different levels of proficiency influenced or not by the proximity of norm-providing models. My main concern is not Kachru's model per se, but if present approaches to English teaching and learning, particularly in FL environments, still resonate its implied normativity, contradicting the calls for the acceptance of new Englishes worldwide. The research questions that shape the study are my attempt to understand if this is the case in Portugal. Recently, Jenkins (2009a) pointed out that "[…] Expanding Circle Englishes are still perceived, even by some WE experts, as norm-dependent […]" (p. 200). If Jenkins is right, such a stance denies the intrinsic dynamism of these Englishes (inclusively hinted by the progressiveness of the verb form Expanding), which seem to be starting to set up authorities of their own. Ironically, argues Seidlhofer (2002, p. 202), the dynamism of the "Expanding Circle" is disregarded, whilst the non-dynamism of "Inner" and "Outer Circles", either you are 'In' or 'Out', is favoured.

In the same vein as Kachru, an alternative model for analysing the global spread of English was proposed by McArthur (1987, p. 11) in the form of a wheel named "The circle of World English":

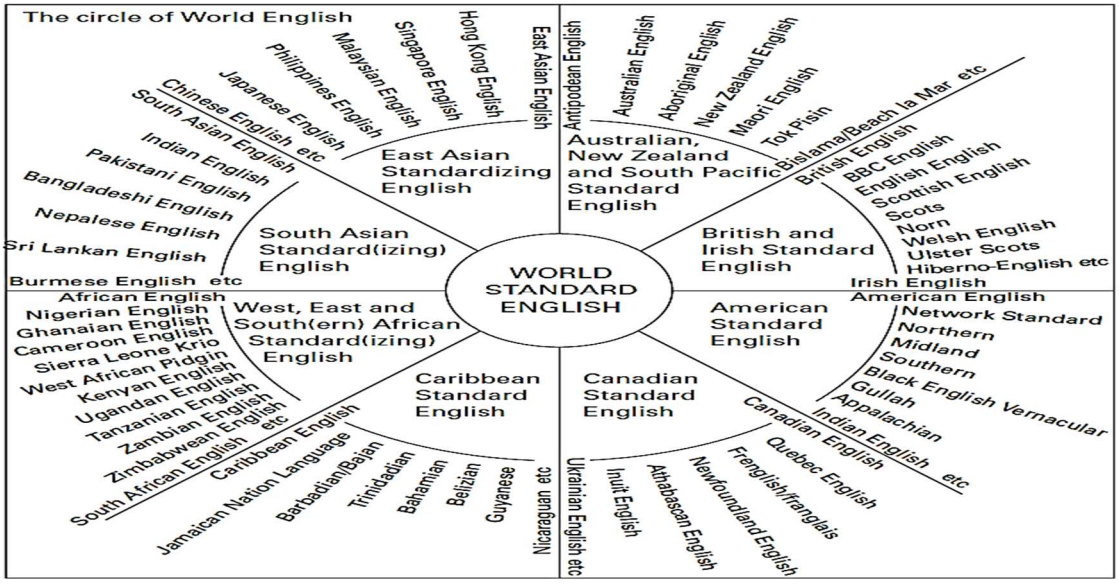

Figure 3 – McArthur's Circle of World English

McArthur's model has its core in an idealised variety of "World Standard English", which did not exist at the time (at least not in an identifiable form), continues not to exist at present and perhaps never will in a foreseeable future. Moving outwards, the next circle comprises regional standard and standardizing varieties (e.g., British/American English and Asian/African English). Finally, the last layer of the circle is made of localised subvarieties closely connected to the regional standard and standardizing varieties of the preceding circle with which they may share, to a greater or a lesser extent, a number of linguistic similarities. Unsurprisingly, like Kachru's, McArthur's proposed model is not free from weaknesses:

- The second circle, although geographically logical, puts on a par distinct types of English language use – standard and standardizing varieties (e.g., British/American English and Asian/African English);
- The model does not indicate if EFL regions are considered to have standardising forms or not. Again, as pointed out above for Kachru, this may imply that McArthur's framework also conceives EFL varieties as "performance" varieties;
- The model excludes the visible rising multitude of English varieties within mainland Europe;
- The ambiguous status of some subvarieties are not taken into account. Scots, for instance, is put on a par with Scottish English, both as a British English variety, when in fact Scots is a heterogenous variety of Scotland made of several regional dialects with no agreed standard form;
- Finally, in the outer layer of the model McArthur includes pidgins, creoles and L2 Englishes. "English pidgins and Creoles do not belong unambiguously to one family: rather they have overlapping multiple memberships" (Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008, p. 28).

Shortly after, Görlach (1990) proposed a quite similar model denominated "Circle model of English". It is intentionally not shown here because it overlaps MacArthur's in many respects. For instance, Görlach also excludes the different Englishes being used in mainland Europe and also mixes, beyond the outer rim, distinct varieties of pidgins and creoles. It seems, then, that both models fail to capture important sociolinguistic nuances of English language use throughout the

world. Perhaps, as suggested by Bruthiaux (2003), even more so over a decade later, there is a need "to base a model of English worldwide on a sociolinguistic description of contexts for the language than to see it primarily as promotion for selected varieties […]" (p. 175). Such a model should acknowledge the complexities of specific countries (e.g., South Africa), as well as recognize conspicuous differences amongst English-using territories. Geopolitical power and size of the population, discrimination between multicultural and monocultural ethos and, the most relevant for me, proficiency levels and communicative practices based on intelligibility could be a useful starting point set of criteria.

Indisputably not as relevant, additional models for the expansion of the world's Englishes have been proposed by other scholars, apparently in an attempt to improve the preceding ones, particularly Kachru's, by considering more recent language developments and the criticisms made. One of these scholars is Tripathi (1998), who argues that there is a need "for considering the 'third world nations' as an independent category that supersedes the distinction of ESL and EFL" (p. 55). Yano (2001), on the other hand, suggests a distinction between the use of English as a means of international or intranational communication "represented in terms of the social dialectical vertical concept of "acrolect" and "basilect" used in creole studies" (p. 123). The acrolect should be used for international communication or, if needed, formal, public domestic interaction. On the opposite end, the basilect should be used for intranational colloquial communication. Lastly, Schneider (2003), who centred his approach in the Asia-Pacific region (it is not clear how the model would fit other parts of the world), proposes a "Dynamic Model of the Evolution of New Englishes" (p. 243). Identity construction is at the heart of Schneider's model, being the basis for his outline of the spread of English in five consecutive phases: phase 1 – *Foundation*; phase 2 – *Exonormative Stabilisation*; phase 3 – *Nativisation*; phase 4 – *Endonormative Stabilisation*; and phase 5 – *Differentiation*.

A more recent and distinct attempt to describe the developments in the rise of English globally is Modiano's (1999a, p. 25) model of "Centripetal Circles of International English":

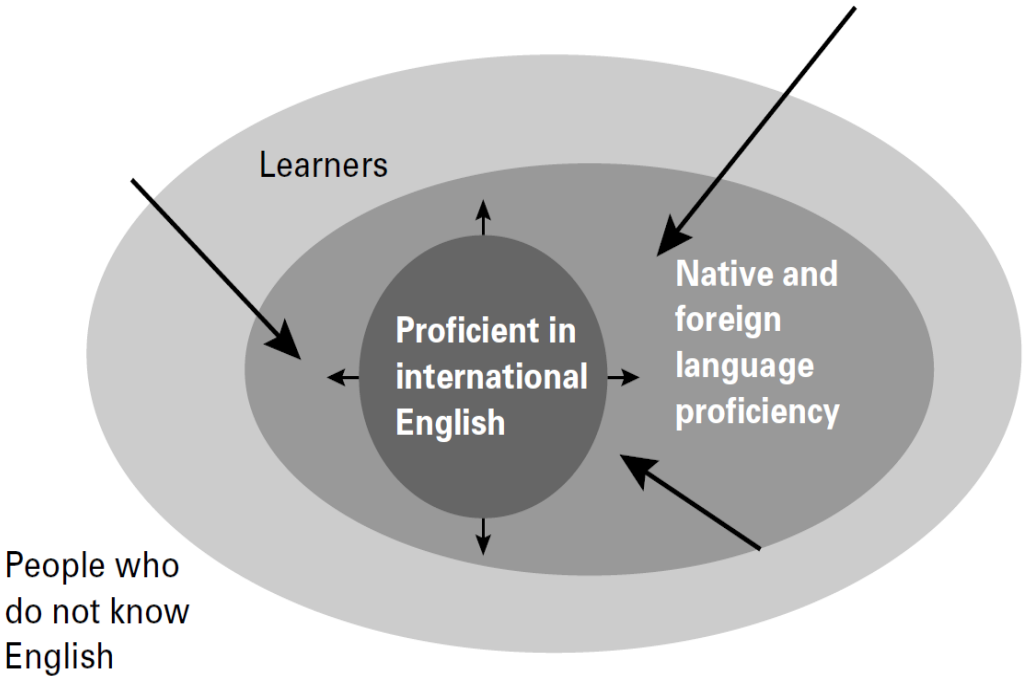

Figure 4 – Modiano's Centripetal Circles of International English

Modiano's model breaks away from the precedent historically and geographically based models of Kachru and McArthur, amongst others, considering the speakers' proficiency (be they NS or NNS) on a mutually comprehensible variety of English to define the current status of the language. "The categories in this model are fixed by the communicative abilities of the speakers, not by their place of residence or birth" (Guerra, 2005, p. 9).

The core of Modiano's model takes up proficient speakers of EIL, i.e., speakers who function well in cross-cultural communication by having the ability to be comprehensible to the listener and the skill to comprehend the speaker. These include both NS and NNS, as long as they are competent users of international English. In line with Modiano's rationale, not all NS fit the innermost circle of the model. Those with strong regional accents or dialects are not efficient communicators of international English and will experience difficulty in understanding and making themselves understood in international contexts. Although implicitly, intelligibility is here taken as decisive for spoken interaction, even if the speaker in a native one. Moving outwards, Modiano's next circle is made of speakers who have native and FL proficiency, including those NS who have not mastered EIL to communicate in international settings, but use unclear varieties to speakers of EIL. At this point, a caveat must be made – saying that these speakers

are not competent users of EIL is not the same as saying that they are not competent in English. In reality, NS are able speakers with other NS, especially with whom they share the same L1, and NNS are able speakers with other NNS with whom they share the same L1 background. The last circle is formed by learners of English who are in a midway stage of achieving proficiency in a regional dialect, an indigenized variety or a standard variety of the language. Beyond the circles, there is a final band to represent people with no knowledge of English at all.

This model counters a still reminiscent notion of (near)native proficiency based on prestige varieties (usually British English), yet there is one conundrum I find difficult to solve – Where do we draw the line between a proficient and non-proficient speaker of international English? Modiano does not provide any definition whatsoever on what exactly a proficient international English speaker is. Thus, how can I tell if a speaker has a strong regional accent or not if I do not have a sound basis of international English to match it to? Which begs yet another question – in the absence of a clear definition, who is apt to decide whether any given speaker is placed in the first or the second circle of the model, and thus categorising the speaker's communicative abilities appropriate or not for international English? It seems to me that intelligibility should have been taken into consideration by Modiano as the yardstick against which the speaker's oral communicative success, or otherwise, is to be measured.

In reaction to the comments received, only a few months later, Modiano (1999b, p. 10) presented a redrafted version of his first model based on the features of English common to all native and non-native varieties:

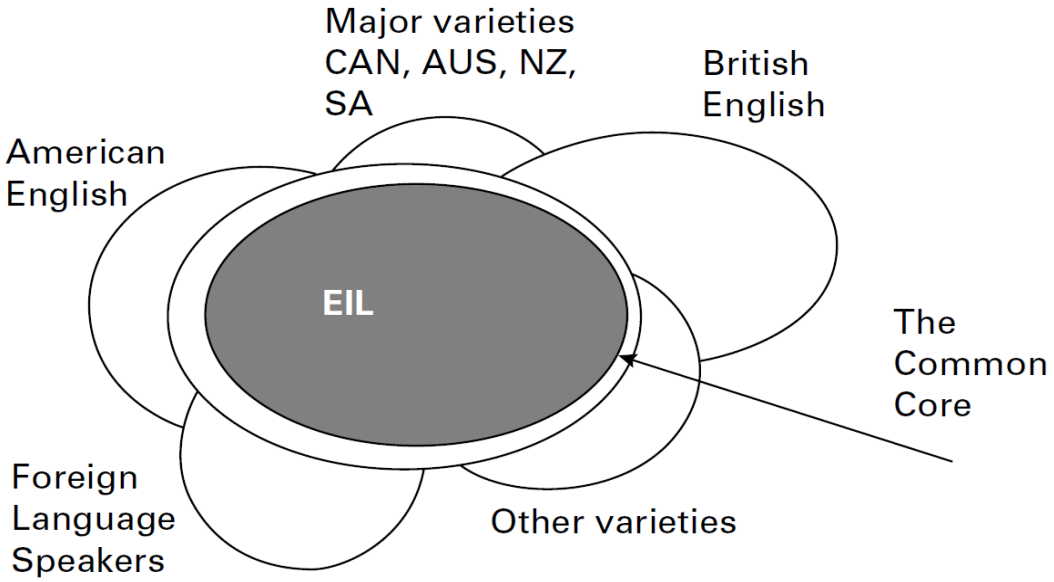

Figure 5 – Modiano's Circles of English as an International Language

Modiano's upgraded second model shows a shaded inner circle to highlight EIL, where its common core features (whatever they may be) understandable by the majority of NS and proficient NNS of English lie. The next circle is somewhat difficult to define. The features of this circle look like they are in a limbo, they may become internationally common use, they may become obscure, or they may "simply be internationally comprehensible but restricted in use" (Modiano, 1999b, p. 11). The final band of Modiano's latest version is made of five circles, each corresponding to one of the following varieties of speakers: American English, British English, other major varieties – Canadian, Australian, New Zealander and South African, other varieties (e.g., Indian English) and FL varieties. Each of these varieties encompasses specific linguistic features of the speech community which are unlikely to be understood by most members of the remaining four varieties. Despite Modiano's attempt to improve his earlier version of the model, some issues seem to persist. Again, the major problem of recognising who fits the central category of the model remains, along with a couple other questions pointed out above. In addition, this new model raises two issues I find noteworthy. First, Modiano puts NS on par with competent NNS, as if all NS are competent language users, which seems untrue or at least debatable from a linguistic point of view. Second, established varieties of English (e.g., Indian English) are deemed as "local", whereas native varieties are deemed as "major". I wonder if such designations are indicative of a variety hierarchy along the prestige continuum. Nevertheless, Modiano's time-honoured

categorisation of English speakers may prove itself useful as the outset for understanding the international use of the language in the twenty-first century. For the reasons pointed out throughout this section and the scope of the study, Modiano´s and Kachru's models serve as the backbone of the research.

I. 2.1 – Pluralising Language with 'New Englishes'

The monolithic view of English has been steadily challenged by the emergence of "New Englishes", grounded in the global spread of the language itself, whose ownership is now transnational. Nowadays, it has become commonplace to use the plural form Englishes, although it may still raise some eyebrows, to both highlight the current diversity of the language and broaden its ownership by contradicting one single authority, prestige and normativity. The term "New Englishes"[11] usually covers a number of varieties of English used in territories where it is not the majority of the population's L1 (usually corresponding to Kachru's "Outer Circle"). Such a view is not without controversy, as Mufwene (2000) argues that the term "new English" should apply to all varieties identifiable as English today, "since every spoken language is adapted by its speakers to current communicative needs and contexts" […] (p. 9).

These varieties are not uniform among themselves in their language features and use, but they do share some characteristics to which their intrinsic postcolonial identity is germane. Platt, Weber and Ho (1984, pp. 2-3) set four parameters to define a variety as New English:

[11] The term "New Englishes" is broadly similar to the term "World Englishes" as they do overlap partially in their linguistic range. In Applied Linguistics literature, as well as conferences and seminars on the topic, they are sometimes used interchangeably, yet their emphasis is not exactly the same. The former emphasises new standardized (or in the process of becoming standardized) autonomous varieties in postcolonial countries encompassed in Kachru's "Outer Circle" (e.g., Nigerian English / Singaporean English) "developed on the basis of a systematic pattern that directly correlates with the formal properties of the language rather than its social functions" (Dendrinos, Karavanta, & Mitsikopoulou, 2008, p. 3); whilst the latter, used in its wider sense, emphasises all varieties of English (including "New Englishes") and the many approaches to study the language use across the globe, regardless of which Kachruvian circle they come from. Yet, some scholars, like Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008) argue that "World Englishes" is not an entirely satisfactory term because it does not represent the "L1 varieties of places like the UK and USA" (p. 12), thus using the terminology English Language Complex (ELC), as suggested by McArthur (2003, p. 56), for the entire set of Englishes worldwide (see Mesthrie and Bhatt's list of Englishes' subtypes (2008, pp. 4-6)).

1) It has developed through the education system. […] it has been taught as a subject […] and used as a medium of instruction […];
2) It has developed in an area where a native variety of English was not the language spoken by most of the population;
3) It is used for a range of functions *among* those who speak or write it in the region where it is used;
4) It has become 'localised' or 'nativized' by adopting some language features of its own, such as sounds, intonation patterns, sentence structures, words and expressions.

Bamgbose (1998, pp. 3-4) proposes a distinct approach, based on five internal factors, to decide on the status and acceptance of an innovation, i.e., a "New English", despite its differences when compared to a native-variety-based standard:

1) Demographic factor – How many speakers of the acrolectal variety use it?
2) Geographical factor – How widespread is it?
3) Authoritative factor – Who uses it?
4) Codification factor – Where is its use sanctioned?
5) Acceptability factor – What is the attitude of users and non-users towards it?

Bamgbose draws special attention to factors four and five, stressing their decisiveness to legitimize any particular "New English" variety, otherwise innovations will inevitably continue to be labelled as errors. This seems to be a problem faced by all "New Englishes" in their earlier stages – an entrenched view that there can be only one English, the standard (mainly British) one. Even "older" varieties of the language faced the same problem at some point in time. The merits of American English versus standard British usage were once substantially discussed. Not long ago, Australian English forms still had negative connotations attached to their differences from the prestige standard norm. It must be stressed that by "older" I am not suggesting superior or more appropriate and, for that matter, "new" as inferior or inaccurate, nor am I implying any kind of hierarchy amongst Englishes. In truth, India's "New English" is older than Australia's English. My use of the words is simply meant to distinguish between Englishes which flourished in pre-colonial days and are to a considerable extent a continuation of

British English norms and postcolonial Englishes learnt typically as a second language in bi or multilingual environments, which more recently also include Englishes developed by NNS in international or "glocal" contexts – EIL or English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)[12], as is the case of most Portuguese learners outside the school's walls in their predominantly spoken interactions. Some scholars in this field of study (for instance, Jenkins (2009b)) do the distinction by using lower case "new" for the former group and upper case "New" for the latter.

I hold that all Englishes, "new", "old" or "New", should be considered equally significant in their own right and not deviances from a hegemonic single standard English. In line with this view, I also want to draw attention to the apparent innocuous use of the widely applied phrase "varieties of English" throughout Applied Linguistics literature, which, in my opinion, should be used with caution. If, on the one hand, the singular form "variety" may be a straightforward, technical term to describe any form of linguistic expression – Register, Dialect, Accent, and so forth; on the other hand, its plural form counterpart "suggests the heteronomy of such varieties to the common core of "English"" (Bolton, 2006, p. 289). This is where the predicament may lie. From this perspective, the "New Englishes" perpetuate the cultural and political domination of English, at the expense of other Englishes, instead of constituting innovative culture-specific language alternatives against nationalist and exclusionary interpretations. Hudson (1996), after a thorough review of variety-based approaches to language, records essentially negative connotations attached to language variation, as well as to some of terms used to describe it, like pidgins or creoles. Mufwene (2003) goes further to claim a social

[12] The concepts of EIL and ELF are fairly similar in their range; thus, being used interchangeably by many scholars (e.g., Jenkins (2007) and Cavalheiro (2015)) to reflect the use of the language for communication between people of different linguistic backgrounds. Indeed, it is Jenkins (2007) who claims that "ELF and EIL (English as an International Language) are one and the same phenomenon, and [. . .] both refer to lingua franca uses of English primarily among its non-mother tongue speakers" (p. xi). Yet, Seidlhofer (2011) offers a different stance based on the distinction between localised EIL and globalised EIL, i.e., ELF. For this scholar, EIL "is usually understood as covering uses of English within and across Kachru's "circles", for intranational as well as international communication" (ibid. p. 3). The English spoken in countries encompassed in the Outer circle is considered localised EIL, whilst the English spoken in everyday speaking events by people who do not belong to the same speech communities is considered globalised EIL, i.e., ELF. ELF is, then, "any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option" (ibid. p. 7).

bias expressed in the nomenclature of "New Englishes": "[…] the naming practice of new Englishes has to do more with the racial identity of those who speak them than with how these varieties developed and the extent of their structural deviations" (p. 107). The process of constructing these new national Englishes correlates undeniably, he goes on to suggest, with the race of their speakers, by asserting that "[t]he legitimate offspring are roughly those varieties spoken typically by descendants of Europeans around the world, whereas the illegitimate ones are those spoken primarily by populations that have not fully descended from Europeans" (p. 108).

It seems then, by this state of affairs, that a different conceptualization of "New Englishes" is needed to revise older and accommodate newer realities of global spread, in order to truly promote the language's pluralisation, suggested in my title. To start with, the issue of variety could, perhaps, be mitigated if scholars would avoid using it as an analytical-base concept in sociolinguistics to measure structural local forms of the language (phonetic, phonological, lexical, and grammatical nuances) against those of the putatively standard (mainly British) ones. Possibly, such attitude would conflict with the claims of some scholars, such as Bamgbose (referred to above), about legitimization, especially in terms of codification and acceptance, respectively Bamgbose's factors four and five. As in many branches of variation study, an "item-based approach to linguistic variation, whereby phonological and syntactic (and possibly lexical) variations are correlated against such social variables as age, sex, social class, social network, etc." (Bolton, 2006, p. 301), could prove to be a valid solution to address this question.

The racist exclusion of a group of speakers pointed out by Mufwene is also a problem to consider. English pidgins and creoles have been disenfranchised from the set of Englishes and, thus, stipulated as separate languages, regardless of their speakers' claims on English linguistic identity too. This happens most certainly due to their speakers' ability "to develop norms that are community-based rather than imposed by speakers of other varieties of the lexifier" (Mufwene, 2003, p. 106), i.e., they set up standards of their own through a process of (self)autonomization. For instance, "English creoles" have recognizable English vocabulary, yet they have a mixed derived grammar (African languages with non-standard forms of English), as

a result of contact. Therefore, the rather straightforward answer for the problem raised by Mufwene, the inclusion of creoles in the group of Englishes, would in fact pose a challenge to the notion of "New Englishes", and "World Englishes" for that matter, as it is currently perceived within the paradigm, by questioning the legitimacy of NS as norm-providers. Creoles do not conform to exonormative standards, they develop their own.

A creole-inclusive linguistic world view would immediately destabilise the current conceptualization of "New Englishes", "which by and large relies on a belief in a core, central grammar and lexicon of English (which is what makes new Englishes still English), […] divergences from the core are viewed as 'localisations' as long as the overarching system remains intact (Pennycook, The Myth of English as an International Language, 2006, pp. 106-107). "New Englishes", as presently construed, seem to not be doing justice to other Englishes that go beyond the emergent national standard pattern. By leaving them out, the concept of "New Englishes" runs the risk of perpetuating the linguistic imperialism it seeks to resist, falling into the trap of core, variety and exclusion. Downplaying creoles is to deny the very essence of many Englishes genesis throughout their colonial and postcolonial history.

More recently, James (2008) claims that the study of "New Englishes" has been substantiated, thinking of Kachru, by a geographical fallacy, whereby the location of the Anglophone communication is expected to be reflected in the structural properties of the new English variety (p. 98). In a similar vein to what has just been said about the need to include creoles in the "New Englishes" set, James advocates a sociolinguistic revision and expansion to accommodate further Englishes, as a result of globality, in this case "New Englishes" as a Lingua Franca, which manifests itself in the media, technology, international business, academia, etc. These post-geographic Englishes do not develop continuously during an extended period of time within a given society or speech community. Instead, they arise when necessary, in unplanned situations for immediate communication (chiefly oral), either face to face or in technology-mediated interaction – (cell)phone to (cell)phone, computer to computer. This is of particular interest for the study because, as pointed out above, it reflects the use of English by most Portuguese

learners – predominantly spoken interactions outside the classroom in their "glocal" contexts due to the touristic boom, say the South of Portugal or Lisbon for instance, or internationally while travelling abroad or in technology-mediated interaction with fellow teens around the globe. Thus, the need to understand if these "New Englishes" as a Lingua Franca have a positive correspondence in Portugal's L2 classrooms, which translates in my research questions. It is the teachers' job to keep up with the pluralisation of the language by helping their learner-users to become more proficient and intelligible speakers. However, I am under the impression that speaking proficiency and intelligibility play second fiddle in Portugal's L2 classrooms when compared to the efforts made to get writing and especially grammar right. Of course, this is important when certain purposes demand formal genres, but in most cases, speakers simply want to get their messages across in ELF. In point of fact, the predominance of spoken interaction amongst younger generations of users strongly influenced writing. Sentences are shorter, colloquial expressions are used more often and a shared knowledge of context is assumed. These "New Englishes" as a Lingua Franca have undeniably tipped the scales in favour of speaking within teenager learner-users. The issue is, then, how does this shift is reflected on the teaching practices of Portuguese practitioners (research questions number 1 and 2).

The newness of James's proposed "New Englishes" as a Lingua Franca is the focus on the individual rather than the group, which opens up the possibility for individually shaped forms to meet the speaker's needs for practical purposes. In terms of post-geographic "New Englishes" as a Lingua Franca, this functional use of the language as a resource for its speakers is addressed as *genre*, adding to the Hallidayan concepts of *dialect* and *register*. *Genre* is then a "[…] linguistic system (code) employed by users for close verbal engagement with interlocutors in inter- and transactional contexts and as such is a language for functional purposes" (James, 2008, p. 101). The notion of *genre*, as defined by James, is embedded in language as a social event, thus, lending itself to be an analytical sociolinguistic tool in colloquial international communication, where frames of reference for linguistic description are absent, as is the case of post-geographical Englishes, whose structural properties do not reflect an identifiable speech community. The nature of these "New Englishes'" interactions and interactants leads to the collapse of traditional

definitions of speech communities, offered by centre linguists. Twenty-first century new domains of cultural practice blurred the boundaries of geographical linguistically defined communities.

In an era of sociolinguistic diversity, the duopoly of American and British English seems to be very much alive. Hopefully, serious debate about the role of "New Englishes" will motivate a revaluation of the paradigm itself. Again, I reiterate the value of a truly pluricentric approach to English language use if we are to capture its complexities. Nomenclature, linguistic hegemony, language subjugation, racist exclusion and geographical irrelevance are but a few of the topics highlighted here that need further discussion. The rapidly changing realities of English language use across the globe call for the decentralizing potential of "New Englishes", which in turn should have a positive correspondence in the teaching-learning process taking place inside the EFL classroom.

I. 2.2 – The tension between Centrifugal and Centripetal forces

The fast, global spread of English worldwide has opened the gateway for a diversity of Englishes that reflect how the language has been evolving over the years and is affected by differentiated local contexts, even in "Inner Circle" countries where immigration is influencing new patterns of English language use. In the beginning of the millennium, the British newspaper *The Times* (as cited in Bolton (2006, p. 305)), reported the use of over three-hundred different languages in the London area amongst schoolchildren. However, these so-called varieties of "New/World Englishes" have been considered deviances, or at best subsidiary variations of a legitimate standard originated primarily in the UK, by centre linguists. This assumption seems disputable because it does not take into account the pluralisation of the language discussed in the previous section. Drawing on Mufwene's rationale above, although language is partly inherited, as a system it is also made by its speakers. Thus, the controversy between the "New/World Englishes" paradigm, represented by Braj Kachru, as opposed to the Modern Foreign Languages paradigm, represented by Randolph Quirk, led to a fierce exchange of arguments and counterarguments in the early 1990s, famously known in Applied Linguistics as the English Today debate. The tension between the two linguists'

stances over English resonates with the much-cited Bakhtinian distinction between *centrifugal* (or heterogenising) and *centripetal* (or homogenising) forces in language change. Metaphorically, Quirk is the sceptic gatekeeper of English standards, whilst Kachru is the enthusiastic deviant trespasser. The former views non-native Englishes from a deficit standpoint (pedagogically insufficient as models), whereas the latter views non-native Englishes from a difference standpoint (valid local teaching models). More than the intrinsic expertise of these two scholars, Quirk and Kachru's added value for this study is their representativeness of the opposite EFL – (New Englishes) ELF poles. The answer to research question number two – Are speaking and intelligibility truly a neglected party in the Portuguese EFL classroom? will shed light on which pole Portuguese EFL teachers place their reliance on. In other words, do Portuguese EFL teachers align with Quirk's NS bias or with Kachru's call for acceptance of different Englishes; with unrealistic, and even unnecessary, native-like pronunciation targets or mutual intelligibility.

I will, then, summarize both parties' most significant opinions expressed in their landmark papers – Quirk's *Language Varieties and Standard Language* (1991, pp. 165-177) and Kachru's (1991, pp. 206-226) *Liberation Linguistics and the Quirk Concern*.

Quirk asserts the following:

- The most important distinction to be made, educationally and linguistically, is that of native and non-native, because NS and NNS have radically different intuitions and internalisations of the language. This distinction implies: a) the need for non-native teachers to be in constant touch with the native language, b) the need for native teacher support, c) objection to any attempt of non-native variety institutionalisation;
- Learners need to be taught Standard English if they are to thrive educationally and professionally. Therefore, it is the teachers' duty to teach Standard English;
- Those with authority in education and the media in countries claiming to have an institutionalised variety tend to protest that the so-called national variety of English is an attempt to justify inability to acquire what they persist in seeing as 'real' English. In such countries, the English of the

teachers themselves inevitably bears the stamp of locally acquired deviation from the standard language;

- The teaching of English should not involve conflicts over standards, their occurrence is but a reflection of half-baked quackery sustained by academic linguists with little experience of FL teaching;
- If I were a foreign student paying good money in Tokyo or Madrid to be taught English, I would feel cheated by such a tolerant pluralism. I would be particularly annoyed at irrelevant emphasis on the different varieties of English when I came to realise they mattered so little to NS of English.

Quirk's rather uncompromising convictions about other Englishes were matched by Kachru's vigorous response:

- The solution of "constant touch with the native language" does not apply to the institutionalized varieties for more than one reason: first, it simply is not possible for a teacher to be in constant touch with the native language; second, the users of institutionalized varieties are expected to conform to the local norms and speech strategies since English is used for interaction primarily within intranational contexts;
- Natives may have "radically different internalizations" about their L1 but that point is not vital for a rejection of institutionalization. In fact, the arguments for recognizing institutionalization are that such users of English have internalizations which are linked to their own multilinguistic, sociolinguistic and sociocultural contexts;
- Quirk's "deficit linguistics" entails six important assumptions: 1. Rejection of the underlying linguistic motivations for the range of variation, and suggesting that such variational models are motivated by an urge for linguistic emancipation or "liberation linguistics"; 2. Rejection of the sociolinguistic, cultural, and stylistic motivations for innovations and their institutionalization; 3. Rejection of the institutionalization of language (in this case, specifically English) if used as a second language; 4. Rejection of the cline of varieties within a non-native variety; 5. Rejection of the endocentric norms for English in the Outer Circle; 6. Rejection of the distinction between the users of what I have termed "the

Outer Circle" (ESL) of English and "the Expanding Circle"(EFL). Quirk settles for a dichotomy between the native speakers vs the non-native (L2) speakers;

- Quirk seems to perceive the spread of English primarily from the perspective of monolingual societies, and from uncomplicated language policy contexts. The concerns he expresses are far from the realities of multilingual societies, and negate the linguistic, sociolinguistic, educational and pragmatic realities of such societies.

Quirk's and Kachru's diametrically opposed positions not only drew attention to this topic, identified around the late 1970s and early 1980s, but also set the tone for the debates to come for the next twenty-five years. Although pertaining to present reality, many of the issues still discussed today have their genesis on the Quirk-Kachru controversy. The dichotomies native / non-native; standard norms / non-standard norms; monolithic / multilingual are just a few examples that echo both linguists' standpoints. The Quirk-Kachru controversy "may ultimately be an *academic* polarity" (Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008, p. 205), yet a significant one. Of course, the real world of the classroom and its surroundings is a whole different matter. Here it is the attitudes and perceptions of school board, parents, students, but especially teachers that rule pedagogic principles and practices. So, the problem lies on which side of the polarity resonates the most amongst (Portuguese)EFL teachers. This is why Quirk's and Kachru's viewpoints are so relevant for my research questions. The sociolinguistic frame of mind of the teacher is pivotal for his/her language teaching approach, either s/he is native or non-native. To exemplify, Quirk, in the article referred to above, speaks of his wonderment when talking with a young British teacher of English in Madrid who told him he accepted non-standard English phrases as long as he understood what they meant (1991, p. 173). As for non-native teachers, in fairly close Asian countries, we also have contrasting viewpoints – in Hong Kong Standard English norms are still revered, whilst in the Philippines their imposition is often rejected. I, as a lower secondary teacher myself, have witnessed first-hand in different Portuguese schools both viewpoints striding side by side throughout the school year, depending on the teachers' convictions of what is best for the students' academic and professional future. I would say this is a positive sign of critical mass increase on the impact of English(es)'s spread. Nonetheless, if truth

be told, the scales tip towards Quirk's deficit linguistics ideology, which strikes me as odd because it implies an inability of NNS to be teachers, unless supported by a NS teacher. But far more important is to determine whether this adherence to Quirk's pedagogical ideology influences how learners are expected/required to develop their ability to speak and pronounce a language (research question number three) if unrealistic goals are set for them. As it seems, one's language awareness plays a decisive role on the balance between centrifugal and centripetal forces. Perhaps, it would be fitting to provide pre- and in-service teachers, both native and non-native, with courses on "New/World Englishes" under the ELF paradigm. Not only would it help teachers to make their language teaching choices, regardless of the forces they find themselves attracted to, but also these teachers' future students, whose frame of mind towards language learning is also imperative. Kubota (2001), in a small-scale study conducted at a public high school in North Carolina, investigated the attitudes of the American English NS students towards the English(es) of NNS. Kubota found a great deal of intolerance against foreign accents and marked ethnocentrism, in and outside the classroom. Students manifested their avoidance of interactions with NNS of English.

Outside the classroom, it is also difficult to predict how English as a language of increasingly global communication will develop. A few years after the Quirk-Kachru controversy, Graddol (1997), in his final section *English in the future*, carries on the tension between centrifugal and centripetal forces by asking: a) "whether English will fragment into many mutually unintelligible local forms […]"; and b) "whether current 'national' standards (particularly US and British) will continue to compete as models of correctness for world usage, or whether some new world standard will arise […]" (p. 56). This supranational variety capable of superseding traditionally putative standard models is rejected by the author, whose predictions fall in the scope of competing pluricentric standards of English. Apparently travelling a different route, Crystal (2003) points to the opposite direction, although Crystal also refers the existence of many national Englishes, claiming the existence of a new form of English that matches the present needs of international encounters – World Standard Spoken English (WSSE):

> People would still have their dialects for use within their own country, but when the need came to communicate with people from other countries they would slip into WSSE. […] People who attend international conferences, or who write scripts for an international audience, or who are 'talking' on the Internet have probably already felt the pull of this new variety. […] But it is too early to be definite about the way this variety will develop. WSSE is still in its infancy. Indeed, it has hardly yet been born (pp. 185-186).

This new, unifying dialect would therefore be the answer for Graddol's first question, if there were to be fragmented, mutually unintelligible local forms in the future. Twenty years after Crystal's claim (the first edition of his book was published in 1997), I am not sure if WSSE has in fact grown to be fully developed. Having the advantage that only time could give, I would say that WSSE has never left its infancy. The processes of accommodation and meaning negotiation implied by Crystal have emerged with full thrust from within the "New/World Englishes" paradigm as EIL and/or ELF, where much of the concern lies on the concept of intelligibility (to be dealt in-depth in the next chapter). Notwithstanding, the basic premise of guaranteeing international intelligibility between interlocutors of distinct linguistic backgrounds overlaps WSSE, EIL and ELF. My only quibble, though recognizing Crystal's rationale, is his nomenclature, which may suggest a transnational standard of English to be acquired by global citizens linked to the USA/UK linguistic hegemony, when in fact this is not the case. As highlighted above, terminology finds expression in the centrifugal-centripetal dynamics. Instead of contributing to the decentralising of English standard norms, Crystal's terminology may be doing quite the opposite.

How English will develop in the world cannot be predicted, but certainly it will continue to undergo linguistic changes, despite Quirk's objections, and serve as a means of transnational communication. As a result, the ownership over a hegemonic British/American standard seems hardly maintainable and desirable. In fact, if such custody over the language was to be granted to England and the United States its development and international status would be undermined. Despite Kubota's conclusions, shared and extensively debated by Lippi-Green (2012), the United States are perhaps the most acute example of how ownership is changing

from local to global. In the beginning of the century, the largest English-speaking country of the world, according to Crystal's estimates (2003, p. 62), showed a gap of roughly 63 million people between total population and L1 usage. Almost twenty years later, this gap has only widened. In addition, considering the ratio highlighted at the beginning of this section, claims of sole custody based on birth places or residency seem arguable, at best. Perhaps, Quirk's followers will feel uneasy with this turn of events, but they have no alternative because language change cannot be stopped; it is like a living organism beyond (centre)linguists' control.

Making use of Lippi-Green's book title, I would say that English in the USA, as well as worldwide, is increasingly being spoken with an accent. Nowadays, other people own it too. This is not to say that language subordination is eradicated, but the imbalance is getting even. From a sociolinguistic perspective, we might be witnessing what Quirk would never dream of – a destandardisation of English even within native-speaking countries. Linguistic hegemony can only be dismantled outside the ivory tower of academia. Depending on their allegiance to centrifugal or centripetal forces, (Portuguese) EFL teachers may play a decisive role in it.

I. 3 – English in the EU

The global spread of English has led to increasing research, based primarily in Kachru's concentric circles, on how the language has developed to its current status. Consequently, a growing number of scholars manifest their interest in understanding emerging local Englishes that have flourished throughout the world. However, Kachru's framework does not include Europe, nor any of its countries. It is possible, though, to imagine Europe being ascribed to the "Expanding Circle". Thus, the absence of studies made to ascertain English status in mainland Europe in the years that followed Kachru's proposed model are not surprising, the exception being Berns (1995), who applies Kachru's theory to the European Union (EU) context of 1995, which encompassed only twelve members then. Besides, Bern's distinction between "Outer" and "Expanding Circles" seems ill-defined. The basis upon which Germany is ascribed to the "Outer Circle" is its contrast of language use with Japan. Accordingly, an updated framework of both Kachru's (original model) and Bern's (adapted version for Europe) proposals could be a useful working tool to

draft present-day sociolinguistic profile of English in Europe (figure 6)[13]. I do emphasis the word draft given the rapid and constant developments the language is undergoing. The cornerstone upon which I draw distinctions between speakers is their level of proficiency, which reflects the language's historical context, domains of use, role in the educational system, influence on the media and attitudes towards it in the countries they belong to. As I advocated earlier, this is probably the most appropriate way to conceive English and its speakers at present.

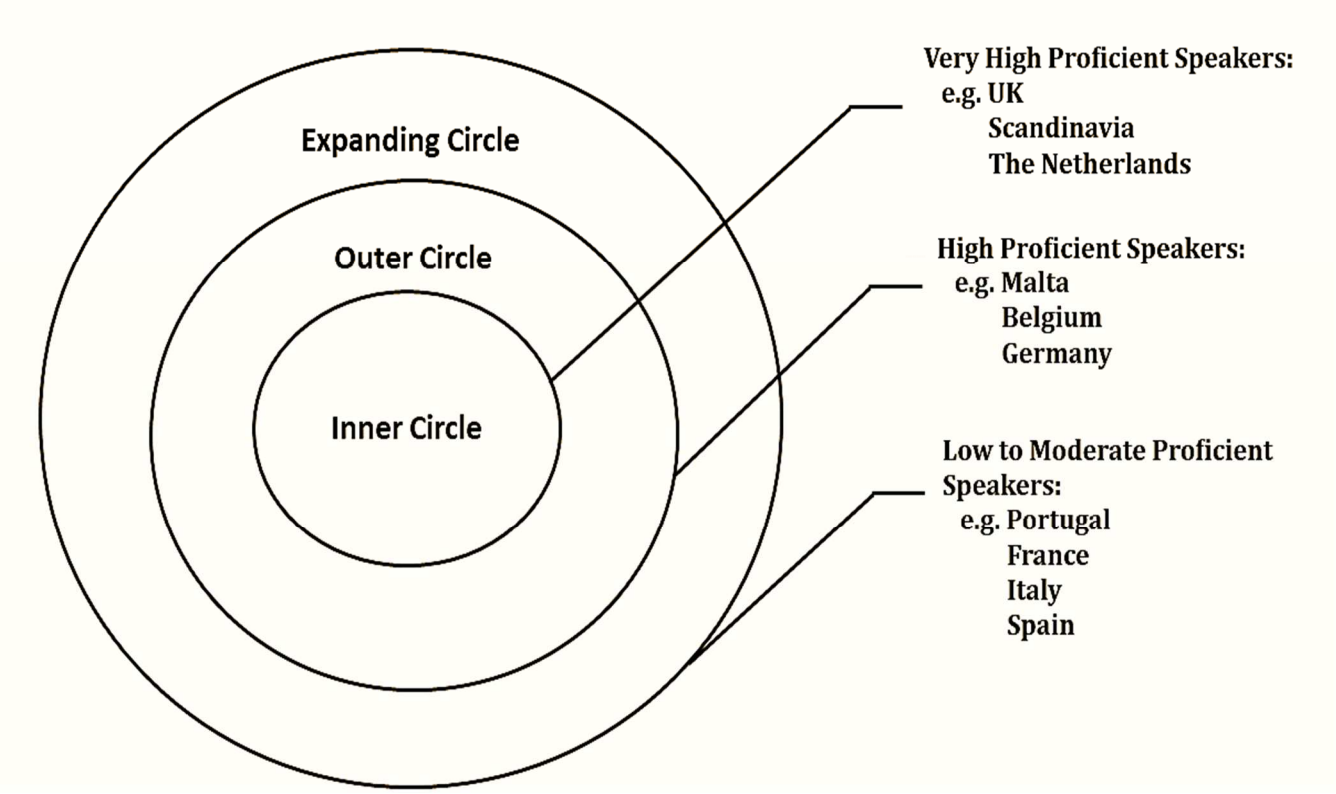

Figure 6 – Concentric Circles of European English(es) Proficiency

The three broad bands of the model encompass Very High Proficient speakers, High Proficient Speakers and Low to Moderate Proficient Speakers. Bearing in mind the aforementioned rationale, the yardstick against which such distinctions are made is that of proficiency. Proficiency, alongside with intelligibility, is here correlated with functional nativeness, as put forward by Kachru (2005, p. 12), in terms of range – the functional domains of language use, and depth – the social penetration of the language. These two variables taken together represent the lion's share of the speakers' proficiency level. The more functional nativeness a

[13] Even though recent socio-political events (British referendum, resulting in the UK withdrawal from the EU, known as Brexit) led to significant turmoil, the UK is still considered in this model.

speaker experiences, the more likely s/he is to have a higher level of proficiency[14]. Of course, there are individual nuances that contribute for better or worse language expertise – age, personality, motivation, learning environment, etc., but these could not be taken into account for the purposes of this model. At this point, a few remarks vis-à-vis this provisional framework are in order:

- As for now, there are 27 member-states in the EU due to Brexit. From the sixteen countries not represented in the examples Ireland would fall in the Very High Proficient Speakers band, Austria, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Estonia would fall in the High Proficient Speakers band and the remaining eleven countries would fall in the Low to Moderate Proficient Speakers band, according to the available data (the functional nativeness of Croatia is not completely clear, as it was the last country to become a member-state – 2013).
- The ascription of the countries to each of the broad bands, suggested both in the examples and previous remark, are backed up by an analysis and cross-check of the following documents: Education First's English Proficiency Index (2011) (2012) (2013) (2014) (2015) (2016) (2017) (2018) (2019) (2020), European Commission's report (founded on a survey carried out by Surveylang) on language competences (2012) and European Commission's special Eurobarometer Europeans and their Languages (2012);
- The broad bands suggested are highly dynamic and tending inward, i.e., most speakers will experience a cline of proficiency. Taking Portugal as an example, according to the English Proficiency Index of 2018 the country ranked amongst the high proficiency band, whilst in 2019 moved up to the very high proficiency band and continued there in 2020. Yet the process along the continuum is not expected to be uniform, some speakers may achieve higher proficiency levels faster than others;
- There are no norm-providing, norm-developing or norm-dependent speakers and the terms native and non-native are abandoned. No group is to be considered more valuable than the next, they are just at distinct

[14] For a thorough discussion on proficiency and what it entails see section II. 2.1.

stages of proficiency. Although the circles are concentric and the terminology in them is identical to Kachru's, the framework does not imply a centre-periphery dichotomy;

- The UK is put on par with equally Very High Proficient Speakers from mainland Europe. To be a NS is not an inherited linguistic advantage, nor is it a synonym for intelligibility. This reasoning is equated by McArthur (2003), who claims that "many foreign users know and use the language better than many native- and second-language users […]" (p. 57).

The fact that English has gained unprecedent ground in mainland Europe seems undisputable. The spike in interest in using English as the language of wider communication internationally, and in some countries even intranationally (e.g., Sweden), is beyond doubt. Here lies the significance of intelligibility. Considering that today's Englishes are borderless, intelligibility cannot be an expendable construct within the EU's FL classrooms, it must always be in the background, right from day one. Hopefully, this study will contribute to a change on how intelligibility is perceived and how important it may be to reinforce bonds between people from different member-states.

By the end of the twentieth century, Hoffman (1998) already indicated English as the "preferred first foreign language taught in schools" (p. 146) in virtually all of Europe. However, the prominent current status the language enjoys was not evident in the early beginnings of the EU. Despite mainland Europe's geographical proximity with the UK, prior to World War II, German and French were the most taught and learned foreign languages. English was also studied but restricted to a small elite. Notwithstanding, in some particular countries, as is the case of Portugal, there has always been contact with the UK for business purposes. As early as the late sixteenth century, British tradesmen established solid commercial ties in the northern region of Portugal, resulting in the settlement of a significant British community in Oporto, strongly connected to the business of Port wine. English's dominant position started to gain impetus in mainland Europe in the aftermath of World War II. The first changes began in Western Europe (Scandinavia and the Netherlands), in-between the 1950s and 1960s, where German and French steadily gave way to English. Shortly after, the trend of German teaching in France

also weakened, whereas English teaching augmented. The gradual decline of French as an international language boosted English's thrust even farther to Southern Europe (Portugal, Spain and Italy) by the late 1970s and early 1980s, where the former was clearly supplanted by the latter. The fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s marked a linguistic shift in Eastern Europe. During the Cold War Russian was the compulsory foreign language across all former Republics. After the Stalinist period's downfall, English teaching was reintroduced in the educational system. In other countries of the Warsaw Pact English had to compete with German – Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and French – Romania, Bulgaria, but progressively English has become the number one foreign language to be taught across schools. Just a few years later, van Essen (1997) claimed that "the linguistic war" (p. 98) was for second position in a game of many losers. van Essen's words imply what could be termed a "flawless victory", in other words English's position at the top of the linguistic pyramid was in a class of its own. He goes on to emphasise the lack of evident signs "of any major increase, within the EU, in the number of students learning Italian or Spanish, while other languages, such as Danish, Dutch, Modern Greek, and Portuguese are badly neglected" (van Essen, 1997, p. 97). Such state of affairs only reinforces my claims over the importance of intelligibility. Right at this point, intelligibility should have started to become a priority in EFL schooling across Europe. Yet this was not the case. Indeed, I am afraid this is still not the case today. The purpose is, then, to reverse the problem, not by going against what has been done, but instead by raising an awareness on the benefits of setting intelligibility goals for EFL learner-users. Bearing in mind the use of the language made by young learners nowadays, (New Englishes) ELF should become integrated with EFL, not replace it.

The pervasiveness of English in mainland Europe depicted by van Essen in the late 1990s, augmented in the following years, begs for the question – where do the firmly established national languages stand? The answer is probably more complicated than desired. Each member-state of the EU is allowed, at least, one official national language, recognized in the organization's legal documents. EU's multilingualism and principle of linguistic equality amongst citizens are enshrined both in the Charter of Fundamental Rights (article 22, under the heading **Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Diversity**) and the Council Regulation (No 1, article 1).

Thus, the EU is obliged to respect and recognize linguistic diversity within its borders, as well as prohibit language-based discrimination. There is a clear attempt of the organization to promote multilingualism, linguistic diversity, multiculturalism and democratic European citizenship. As Byram (2008), a partisan of European language policies, details:

> The 'European project' in which […] co-operation among nation states is taking place is an experiment in economics, identities, social policies and politics that may be followed elsewhere in the world. Languages and language teaching have been an integral part of the evolution of nation states and this new situation has implications for language teaching in a post-nation-state world (p. 3).

Since 2013, when Croatia joined the EU, there are twenty-four official languages[15] in the Union: Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish[16], Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish. Moreover, member-states may request to be granted the use of additional official languages in their countries, say Catalan and Basque in Spain and Frisian in the Netherlands. All Treaties must be translated to all twenty-four official languages of the member-states and all are considered original versions. In the same vein, speeches delivered at the European Parliament must be simultaneously interpreted into all other official languages and citizens are allowed to address the EU institutions in any of these languages, including the European Court of Justice. Yet there is a caveat to be made about this specific institution: the language of the lawsuit is usually chosen by the applicant, but if the defendant is a member-state, automatically the official language of the suit is that of the defendant.

[15] These twenty-four official languages are also denominated working languages. Legally, the EU does not make any distinctions between them. Yet each EU institution may choose, according to its rules of procedure (envisaged in article 6 of the Council Regulation), which languages to use in specific cases.

[16] Irish was conceded the status of official language on request of the Irish government, in accordance with the Constitution of Ireland, in the Council Regulation's amendment of 2005. But, "for practical reasons and on a transitional basis" (Council of Europe, 2005, p. preamble), the Council decided to apply a four-years derogation period from that date, prolonged by five-years periods thereafter. In practice, the EU is unbinded to draft and translate all acts in the Irish language.

To gain some insight on how Europe's current linguistic landscape came to be, it is necessary to briefly put the historical background of the languages themselves into perspective. In the EU, there are groups of related languages, which share the same family[17], though the speakers of these languages are not completely mutually intelligible. Portuguese, for instance, shares the same Latin origin with Spanish, Italian, French and Romanian. Most of the Union's official languages belong to the Indo-European language lineage. The Indo-European family can be subdivided in five different branches: the second most representative is the Germanic branch, whose constituents are Danish, Dutch, English[18], German and Swedish. These languages share several features of word structure and grammar. Also, with five representatives, the Romance branch encompasses the aforesaid Latin descendants Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, French and Romanian (although geographically separate from its siblings and surrounded by the Germanic and Slavonic branches). The Romance and Germanic groups of languages share a few vocabulary features with one another. The most representative branch of the Indo-European family is the Slavonic (also designated Slavic), which encompasses Slovene, Croatian, Bulgarian (form the South Slavonic group), Czech, Polish and Slovak (form the West Slavonic group). Greek alone represents a language branch in its own right. A further branch of the family is the Baltic, whose elements are Latvian and Lithuanian. Finally, the last branch of the Indo-European family is the Celtic with only one member – Irish. A rather smaller language family lineage of the Union's official languages belongs to the Finno-Ugric. This language family includes the Baltic-Finnic branch – Estonian and Finnish; and the Ugric branch – Hungarian. Among the Finno-Ugric languages, Hungarian is a distant relative of Estonian and Finnish. As it happens, Finnish's word and grammar patterns are probably the most dissimilar of all the EU's official languages. Lastly, there is one official EU language, whose affiliation is largely unrelated to the Indo-European and Finno-Ugric language families. The Maltese language is a descendant of the Semitic branch of the Afroasiatic language family, which makes it quite linguistically unique amongst all the EU's official languages. Nonetheless, not only Maltese, but all of EU's official

[17] The central source used for the classification of EU's language families is the *Encyclopedia of the languages of Europe* (Price, 1998).

[18] Although affiliated to the Germanic branch, English is the result of a hybrid mix of multiple origins – Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, Viking and Norman French.

languages are, to a greater or lesser extent, related to languages found in Asia. "The contemporary distribution of languages in Europe reflects the interplay over time of linguistic, geographic, cultural, and political criteria" (Phillipson, English-Only Europe? Challenging Language Policy, 2003, p. 35).

The genetic linguistic make-up of the EU, while diverse, is broadly homogeneous when compared to other continents. Even though each country has its own national language, which for most citizens in each of them is considered their mother tongue, there are relatively few languages and even fewer disparate linguistic families. The existence of a small number of fully standardized and codified languages in Europe was noted by Décsy, who claimed in the early 1990s that "[t]he uniqueness of the European continental linguistic situation is that in this continent the sixty or so aboriginal languages all developed to acrolects" (as cited in Mollin, 2006, p. 57). Almost a quarter of a century later Décsy's claim is supported by the World Languages situation summary view provided by *Ethnologue*[19] (Simons & Fennig, 2017). Table 3 offers an overarching numerical tabulation perspective of the world's living languages distribution in five different areas:

Area	**Living Languages**	
	Count	**Percent**
Africa	2, 144	30.2
Americas	1, 061	14.9
Asia	2, 294	32.3
Europe	287	4.0
Pacific	1, 313	18.5
Totals	7, 099	100.0

Table 3 – Distribution of World Living Languages by Area

The first column indicates the living languages' area of origin. Living language is here defined as a language with speakers for whom it is their mother tongue. The count column accounts for the number of living languages originated in a specified area,

[19] *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* is a cataloguing database of all the living languages known in the world (at present, roughly seven thousand), intended to be used by linguists or other researchers with an interest in language-related topics – bilingualism, endangered languages, language policy, and so forth. It was first issued in 1951 and is now published annually by SIL International. The primary sources for *Ethnologue* data are SIL's massive network of field and academic linguists.

thus extinct languages are excluded from the counts. Languages spoken in more than one country are calculated under the area of its primary country. The percent column provides the proportion, as percentage, between the tally for the area and the total listed at the bottom of the count column. The numbers provided by *Ethnologue* clearly highlight the discrepancy between the European area and the remaining four. It is by far the area where the least living languages originated from with only 287, corresponding to a 4.0% share. Even if compared to the Americas area, the closest to Europe in gross numbers, there is a significant difference of 774 more living languages, corresponding to a 11.0% higher share.

The data offered hint at a rather monolingual Europe when compared to the multingualism experienced in other regions of the world. Language is, therefore, a powerful national identity marker for all speakers of EU's member-states. In some countries of the EU, national languages have an even deeper tone as a means of asserting their independence before former dominant nations. One of the most emblematic attitudes of the Finnish citizens to attest their national identity after gaining independence from Russia, was to start using Finnish publicly. Going back farther in history, the same applies to German when Germany was under Napoleonic seizure. German was believed to be the most iconic trait of the nation. This kind of linguistic nationalism is still traceable nowadays in the much-used slogan "one language, one nation, one state" by minority/ethnic groups seeking their own linguistic liberation. Much of the notion of community, which is central to form a national identity, is firmly attached to one's linguistic affiliation. Even if the EU did not have a strong language policy to promote multilingualism within its extensive borders, it would be difficult to mount a case against this line of thought. Languages are fundamental for personal, group and national identity. But can this ethos be transferred to the EU? Perhaps just a sign of the globalizing times we are living in, identity markers such as language have adjusted to accommodate additional identities. As discussed earlier, in the EU English has assumed the role of additional linguistic identity marker for a clear majority of Europeans, especially younger generations. Again, I reiterate the value of intelligibility as a linguistic means to foster a sense of belonging to an international youth (sub)culture(s), either face to face or through technology, who share similar preferences displayed using English. Berns, de Bot and Hasebrink (2007) found out that "English serves as a marker of a

social identity, of group relations, but does not replace the identities established in the first language […] Instead, the new identity is drawn from what English offers as a linguistic and cultural resource […]" (p. 118). Thus, let us consider the league table of EU's official languages and how they correlate:

Official Language	Mother Tongue	Additional Language	Total
English	13%	38%	51%
German	16%	11%	27%
French	12%	12%	24%
Italian	13%	3%	16%
Spanish	8%	7%	15%
Polish	8%	1%	9%
Romanian	5%	0%	5%
Dutch	4%	1%	5%
Hungarian	3%	0%	3%
Portuguese Swedish / Czech	2%	1%	3%
Bulgarian / Greek	2%	0%	2%
Slovak	1%	1%	2%
Danish / Finnish Lithuanian	1%	0%	1%
Slovene / Latvian Estonian / Irish Croatian / Maltese	< 1%	0%	< 1%

Table 4 – Official Languages by Speakers as Percentage of EU Population[20]

Table 4 indicates the EU's official languages, first column, and the number of speakers as percentage of EU population of those languages as a mother tongue, second column, or as an additional language, third column. The Total column is the sum of the same language's use both as a mother tongue and as an additional language by speakers of different languages. From these figures, German is the most widely spoken mother tongue (16%), followed by Italian and English (13% each), French (12%), Spanish and Polish 8% each), a group of eight languages in-between

[20] The statistics provided are rooted on the data of the European Commission's special Eurobarometer Europeans and their Languages (2012) and Eurostat (available at http://europa.eu/about-eu/facts-figures/living/index_en.htm), taking into account the EU's total population - 508 450 856 million people.

2% and 5% and a final tail of ten languages with 1% or less of speakers. Bearing in mind the fact that national languages are thought of mother tongues for the majority of speakers in each EU country, these percentages positively correlate with the conspicuous differences in size and population amongst them. Germany is in fact the most populous country of the EU with almost 82 million people. The most relevant facts stand out in the Additional Language column. First, more than half of the EU's official languages – Romanian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Greek, Danish, Finnish, Lithuanian, Slovene, Latvian, Estonian, Irish, Croatian, and Maltese – are not spoken as an additional language. Second, on the opposite end of the pole, English has an impressive 38% of speakers as an additional language. Third, English alone has more speakers as an additional language than the rest of EU's official languages combined together (37%). Furthermore, if the Total column is taken into consideration, we realise that English with 51% almost doubles German, the second in rank, with 27%. The foremost conclusion to be drawn from this statistical evidence, although statistics are not definitive, is the massive spread of English in most of EU's countries where it has no official status, which is in line with van Essen's claims. At present, slightly more than half of the EU speaks English. Ironically, remarks Hoffman (2000), "the language that has acquired such wide currency is the tongue which originated in what is now [one of] Europe's most reluctant, and linguistically least adventurous, member" (p. 20). The UK, on par with Portugal, occupies third position (61%) in the ranking of countries, whose citizens are least likely to speak any foreign language (European Commission, 2012).

English in the EU, it can be argued, is in many ways the Latin of Modern days. Despite some differences, like Latin English too has a well-entrenched literary tradition, gives access to a myriad of domains (technology, science, education, religion, law, and so forth), is learnt widely at school across countries and is used as the default language by speakers with distinct linguistic backgrounds. Nowadays, a quarter of Europeans claim to be able to follow radio and television news in English, as well as read newspapers and/or magazines written in this language. As for speaking and writing, again roughly a quarter of Europeans claim to be able to communicate online (e.g., Facebook) in English (European Commission, 2012). If we add the influence of American music and film industry on EU's citizens, like Phillipson (2003), I too think that English "is becoming progressively less 'foreign'

in continental Europe, in that the language is not only learned for use abroad or literary purposes. English has several internal functions in such countries […]" (p. 95). Once more the tripartite division of Kachru's model is challenged, this time by the (socio)linguistic landscape of mainland Europe itself. Here, as in several other regions of the world, the demarcation of an "Expanded Circle" environment, synonymous of FL usage, has got fuzzy lines. The massive spread of English in mainland Europe led Hoffman (2000) to introduce the notion of bilingualism with English to replace the notion of EFL, referring to the frequent use of any given mother tongue plus English, or even a repertoire of three languages in situations of bilingual people (by birth or immigration) who later in their lives added English. This specific type of bilingualism is what she denominates of *achieved* bilingualism (p. 3) because it is not naturally acquired, it is more often than not the result of schooling. In this sense, the mother tongue and/or local language continues to represent local culture, identity and traditions, whilst English is used for the purpose of wider communication, adding another linguistic layer to the speaker's repertoire. If not there already, these speakers are en route to multilingualism. If we are to agree with Philipson and Hoffman, and I do, the question must, then, be asked – why does English continue to be taught across Europe with no regard to its speakers use of the language outside the classroom by foisting upon them putatively standard (mainly British) models when in fact they just need, and want, to be intelligible?

It can be contended that there is a mismatch between EU's institutional language policy commitment to multilingualism and practice, i.e., English may not be the *de jure* language across the Union, but it is *de facto*. Currently, in continental Europe it clearly "dominates in the fields of science and technology, diplomacy and international relations, sports and international competitions, media […], business and commerce, design and fashion, travel and tourism, the entertainment industry, and higher education" (Berns, de Bot, & Hasebrink, 2007, p. 19). Perhaps, as put forward by Crystal (2003), English simply found itself in the right place at the right time. The extraordinary technological and industrial development that took place during the twentieth century opened up the possibility for worldwide networks amongst people from unrelated social, cultural and linguistic upbringings. English easily lent itself to fill the gap between them. Notwithstanding the criticism of some

scholars, among which Phillipson (2003) is perhaps the most vehement, against the prominent role of English within the EU when compared to other official languages, the language's functional range and depth is undeniable. If we crosscheck the data in the European Commission's special Eurobarometer of 2012, we come to the conclusion that the EU's citizens already acknowledge English as the chosen language to use in cross-cultural intra-European communication, even if they are not aware of it. First, while most Europeans (81%) believe in equality for all of EU's official languages, seven out of ten (69%) agree that Europeans should be able to speak a common language, although they do not overtly indicate English. Second, 84% of Europeans think that everyone in the EU should be able to speak at least one foreign language. Third, more than two thirds (67%) of EU's inhabitants consider English one of the two most valuable languages for themselves (German and French have a share of 17% and 16%, respectively) and when asked vis-à-vis their children the number increases a full twelve points to 79%. Fourth, over two thirds of Europeans (68%) learn foreign languages at school. English is the most widely taught foreign language. Many EU countries have introduced it as early as primary education. Fifth, of the twenty-six member-states where English has no official status, thus excluding the UK and Ireland, in twenty it is the most widely spoken foreign language.

It may be dangerous to extrapolate from these sample indicators an English linguistic imperialism, but in practice the language has become, as Latin once did, the EU's *lingua franca*. Hence, the claims presented thus far for a change in EU's language policies affecting EFL teaching in favour of intelligibility goals for young learner-users of the language. Whether we like it or not (New Englishes) ELF is a reality in Europe denying it will only perpetuate outdated teaching paradigms that do not conform to present-day needs. In the second of a four-video collection on "Worlds of English" from The Open University (OpenLearn), entitled *English in the European Union*[21], Alison Graves, the Head of Training of Interpreters in the European Parliament, overtly states that all languages are to be considered equal, but some are probably more equal than others. In other words, although EU's language policy clearly advocates an egalitarian status amongst all official

[21] Uploaded online in 2011. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKAeFi1IT54.

languages, reality displays a rather distinct scenario. English is much more used than any other language between speakers with unrelated mother tongues, as well as institutionally, and, therefore, much more valued and prestigious. In the same video, the interviewed Member of the European Parliament for Hungary, György Schöpflin, goes further to say that if you do not speak English no one will pay attention. He recalls his own experience when talking in a committee with a speech delivered in Hungarian, which had zero impact, not because of the content but because of the language. He asserts he might as well not have spoken at all. But this tendency is not new. In the same vein, over a decade earlier, Gret Haller (Council of Europe, 2000), the Ombudsperson for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, at a round table on social and economic factors promoting and inhibiting linguistic diversity of a conference supported by the Council of Europe, pointed out that she had "frequently come across situations where you are not taken seriously unless you speak English. […] No one pays attention to what you say unless you speak English, because English is the language of power" (p. 53). Whether we like it or not, whether we are aware of it or not, a pragmatic acceptance of English as *The* language across the EU's countries and major institutions is already well-entrenched in the minds of its speakers. The diglossic[22] situation that a growing number of EU's citizens are experiencing, caused by the unparalleled rise of English, makes mainland Europe's linguistic landscape quite unique, despite some shared features with other parts of the world.

The EU's context of bi or multilingualism is similar to the one found in several Asian countries. Graddol (1997) draws on the analogy between continental Europe and India to portray the Union's linguistic interplay and development. In Graddol's words, Europe "is beginning to form a single multilingual area, rather like India, where languages are hierarchically related in status. As in India, there may be many who are monolingual in a regional language, but those who speak one of the 'big' languages will have better access to material success" (p. 14). The big languages Graddol refers to are German, English, and French, which were the dominant languages at the time. Twenty years later, the sociolinguistic scenery of mainland

[22] Diglossia is used here in its broadest sense, there is not a functional divide between low and high varieties.

Europe regarding English has suffered profound changes. This new setting involves: a) an increasing professional need to learn and use English daily or almost daily, b) a massive schooling of English (for most EU countries, it is a compulsory subject), c) a constant exposure to English via media (most influential the internet), TV, cinema, computer games and music, and d) a growing informal usage of English in face-to-face contact or through social networking, although empirical studies on the use of English in informal micro-contexts still remains scant. The ecologies upon which English is now firmly grounded are many and diverse, reflecting the language's internationalisation (term used by Hoffman (2000) as synonymous of "Americanisation", due to American English's influence worldwide). Much of English's encroachment is thus forged by economic and cultural factors. Speaking English has become *sine qua non* for prestige, to achieve economic success and relate to other cultures and communities. By and large, throughout the past two decades, English supplanted both German and French, whose use seems to be restricted to the EU's employed permanent staff only. Unsurprisingly, the macro and micro structural functions carried out by English in the EU influence the status of the remaining national languages. For now, it is those who speak English that will have more opportunities to access material success, because the hierarchy has changed, as conceptualized in figure 7.

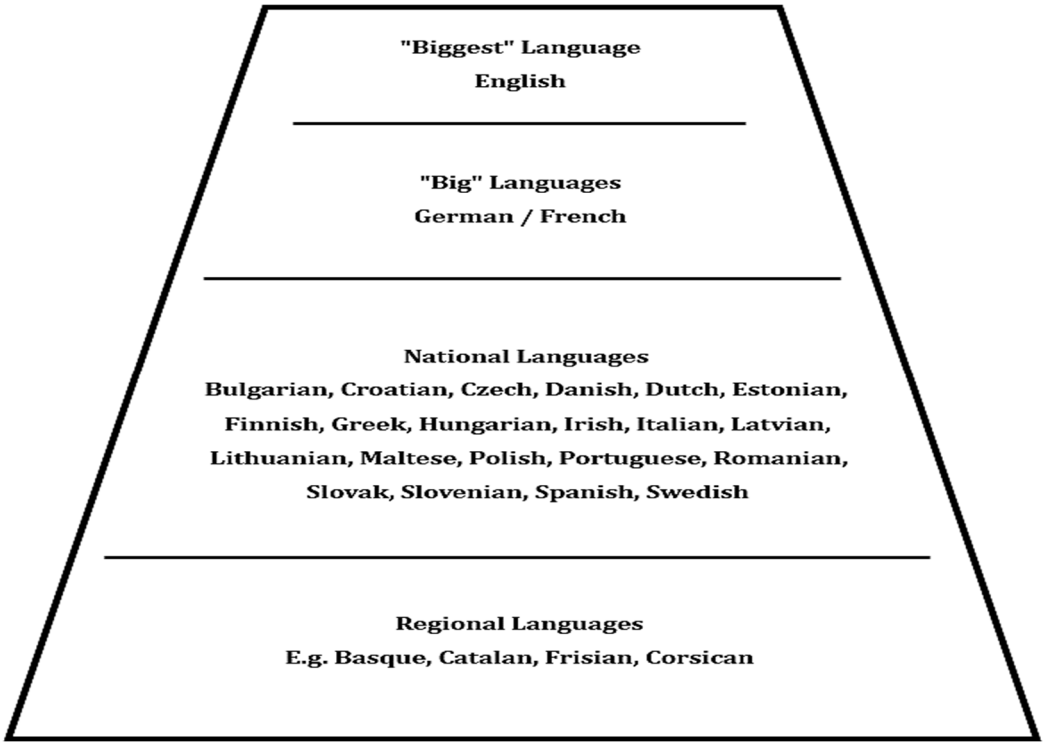

Figure 7 – Language Hierarchy in the EU

Structural and ideological factors paved the way for English's spread and supremacy in continental Europe. It has become a supranational language, whose use is negotiated among its speakers, not imposed by an alleged superior standard that has to be achieved, because their interactions are "temporary relationships with speaker constellations frequently being tied and untied anew for each emerging interaction" (Hülmbauer, 2009, p. 325). Naturally, a rising question is whether or not a speech fellowship in English has developed or is on the verge of developing in the EU? Or, to put it in another way, are we witnessing the emergence of a New European English? If so, the feeling of belonging embodied in the notion of Anderson's (2006) "imagined community" must be present. Otherwise, the cohesiveness of an idealised shared common linguistic code is shattered. Bearing in mind the rationale offered thus far, there are signs that, either by will or need, the EU is converging towards a sociolinguistic unit. Yet it would be naïve to think that all speakers share the same patterns of language acquisition and use. The proposed model to draft present-day sociolinguistic profile of English in Europe at the beginning of this section, showcases the variety of proficiency levels to be found across countries. The assumption of linguistic unity would just be the follow-up of

the existent political and economic unity. Recent data from the European Commission's Eurobarometer "Public opinion in the European Union" (2017) indicates a changing paradigm of identification conducive to a pan-European identity. EU citizens do not forfeit their national identities but start to view themselves as part of a parallel broader community that complements their local values, cultures and traditions. Consistent with the data, EU's image is becoming more positive – four out of ten Europeans (40%, increased five points in a year) conjure up a positive image, around nine out of ten (92%) EU citizens feel attached to their country, but at the same time more than two in three (68%, the highest score ever reached on this indicator) Europeans also feel citizens of the EU. One additional important indicator, as far as language is concerned, is how EU citizens perceive students exchange programmes (e.g., Erasmus or Comenius). A quarter of Europeans ranks them the third most positive result of the EU. These programmes often, if not always, involve extensive use of ELF, which aims at mutual intelligibility, unlike EFL, whose aim is converging to the target model. Once more, intelligibility is brought into play in everyday spoken interactions. Therefore, the point I am drawing attention to is – EU's language policies, which in turn are the guidelines for common local language policies, must reflect the learners' practical uses and needs, otherwise the commitment to FL learning is nothing but a chimera on paper.

The trend displayed by these indicators cannot be overlooked. However, one should be cautious to equate them with an absolute English linguistic unity in the EU. The existence of a shared nativized and institutionalized English norm across mainland Europe, usually labelled Euro-English in recent Applied Linguistics literature, is yet to be determined. The positioning of Euro-English amongst scholars in this academic domain remains controversial, ranging from downright dismissal to passionate acceptance. Mollin (2006), who tried to ascertain if Euro-English was a variety in its own right, rejected this hypothesis, arguing that English is still a FL in continental Europe. Euro-English is perceived as "an amalgam of idiosyncratic learner Englishes" (p. 155), instead of a nativized variety. Conversely, Seidlhofer (2001) holds a diametrically opposed stance, claiming "the emergence of an endonormative model of lingua franca English which will increasingly derive its norms of correctness and appropriacy from its own usage rather than that of the UK or the US, or any other 'native speaker' country" (p. 15). It seems, then, that the

recognition of a European de-Americanized and de-Anglicized English is heavily dependent on the researchers' interpretation of empirical evidence. In other words, if the approach follows, say, Bamgbose criteria (discussed earlier) Euro-English is not a legitimate variety and cannot be considered as such. On the other hand, if James's definition of post-geographic Englishes (also discussed earlier) is preferred, Euro-English fits the "New Englishes" as a Lingua Franca paradigm. Perhaps, this state of affairs is but a consequence of the novelty of the phenomenon.

An in-depth analysis on the emergence (or otherwise) of a Europeanised English goes beyond the scope of this thesis, however some considerations can further be made. To start with, the term Euro-English was coined during the 1980s to refer to the loaned anglicisms in mainland Europe, but the spike in research on the use of English in the EU led to a negative connotation of the term as the incorrect English used in EU's institutions. I wonder if NS speak "correct" English, whatever that may be. Centre linguists most likely see it as an extension of Standard English, implying conformity to British norms. In Brussels, it has been associated to an even more disparaging term – *Eurospeak*, which is "the language of Eurocrats, […] the vernacular of EU politicians and civil servants" (Jenkins, Modiano, & Seidlhofer, 2001, p. 13). The alleged bad English used in the European Commission has been a concern amongst some of its departments. Supported by the European Commission, the Directorate-General for Translation has published a booklet entitled "*How to Write Clearly*" (2015) with hints for clearer writing in institutional documentation. This guide is part of a broader campaign launched in 2010 by the Commission in an attempt to improve communication – The Clear Writing Campaign. The Commission's efforts received considerable attention on the news. *The Economist* covers the issue in the column "Euro-English: Blasting the Bombast"[23], outlining the campaign's purposes and giving voice to Emma Wagner, a longstanding Commission translator and member of the campaign. Another initiative to improve the English output in official documents has been carried out by Jeremy Gardner, a senior translator at the European Court of Auditors and author of "Misused English Words and Expressions in EU Publications" (2016), who documented misused English

[23] *The Economist* (London), Johnson weekly column, 30th of September 2011. Available at https://www.economist.com/johnson/2011/09/30/blasting-the-bombast .

words in the EU, offering the "correct" alternative for each lexical item. Some of Gardner's highlights include:

Misused Word	**Alternative**
Adequate	Appropriate
Coherent	Consistent
Evolution	Development / Trend
Foresee	Envisage / Plan
Homogenise	Standardise
Orientations	Guidelines
Planification	Planning
Suppress	Abolish / Cancel

Table 5 – Example of Misused English Words in the EU

Gardner provides an extensive list of words, in alphabetical order, to accomplish a twofold purpose: a) provide "guidance to readers who are unfamiliar with the EU parlance and b) design a tool "for those who, for reasons of character or personal taste, would like their English to be as correct (in terms of UK and Irish native-speaker norms) as possible […]" (p. 2). Such rationale highlights the claims being made thus far for the necessity to rethink and rebuild some of the foundations of EU's language policies. As they stand, they only widen the gap between how the language is used and the way it is taught in the classroom. Moreover, I totally disagree with the undisguised contempt for NNS, sanctioned by the European Commission, conveyed by Gardner's words. Not only do they downplay NNS' proficiency, but also question their character based on linguistic non-compliance to NS standards. It seems, then, that intelligibility is still far from being accepted as an appropriate goal for FL teaching/learning. Hopefully, this study may prove otherwise.

In not so disparaging overtones, the Euro- element is now becoming associated to the jargon used in the Union to reflect how the speakers are moulding the language to meet their communicational convenience. It functions like a prefix in novel words coined to express EU's-only conceptualizations. Examples of such attuning can be found in *Eurospeak* itself, *Eurozone* (collectively refers to the countries which have adopted the euro as their common currency), *Eurosceptic* (sceptical person regarding the EU integration), *Eurocrats* (officials of the EU –

Commissioners or Members of the Parliament), *Eurocentric* (view of Europe as pre-eminent), and many others. EU's-only lexical repertoire includes other items like *Member States* (group of countries belonging to the EU) or *Schengen* (collectively refers to the countries which abolished internal borders within the EU), but the former are the most iconic of the Union's *Eurojargon*.

On the other hand, the term Euro-English is a cover for two types of English in mainland Europe – Mid-Atlantic English (MAE) and ELF, which Mesthrie and Bhatt (2008, p. 214) describe as the acrolectal variety and basilectal variety, respectively. Briefly, MAE, studied thoroughly in Europe by Modiano (1996) (1998) (2002), is characterised by the mixture of British and American English features in the English spoken by continental Europeans. Mesthrie and Bhatt's claim for MAE as acrolectal is based on the assumption that its use is circumscribed to well-educated and well-travelled NNS speakers, thus users of British Received Pronunciation (RP) and General American (GA) prestige standards. Although, this assumption still holds true for a minority, I would say that currently it no longer applies for most European speakers. For the majority, present day MAE is not only a mix of RP and GA, but also a transference of mother tongue accents and discursive practices. If MAE was once an old term to describe the attunement made by either US or British nationals living in opposite sides of the Atlantic, nowadays it is the natural outcome of formal and informal exposure to both Englishes. RP English represents the formal exposure, usually as the result of FL schooling, which in mainland Europe still sets educational standards and teachers' practices, whereas GA English embodies informal exposure, occurring under "Americanisation" conditions, i.e., under the influence of music, TV series and films. This is particularly salient in EU countries (Sweden, the Netherlands or Portugal, for instance) where subtitling instead of dubbing is the rule, allowing the original soundtrack to be audible. Unknowingly, listeners acquire GA features in these informal contexts, which in turn are reproduced orally. Vocabulary provides a considerable amount of evidence of MAE: speakers opt for US lexical items hood or trunk, instead of British bonnet or boot, but choose British lexical items autumn and cinema instead of fall and movie theatre. The second type of Euro-English is ELF (to be further addressed in the next chapter). MAE and ELF are akin strands of Euro-English, whose distinction can be made on the basis of

proficiency, but the line that may once set them apart is becoming more and more thin, almost imperceptible. Taking into account Mesthrie and Bhatt's (2008) rationale, ELF falls on the basilectal side of the scale. It shows extensive linguistic variation according to the proficiency span of the users, "who are still in the process of mastering the language" (p. 214). In the European context, ELF is frequently employed in spontaneous conversations in informal spheres to meet the less sophisticated communication needs of its speakers. An illustration of ELF's fluidity can be found in James's (2000) snippet of an Austrian / Italian / Slovenian verbal exchange overheard in central Europe: **A** – *I don' wanna drink alcohol*. **B** – *Me too*. **C** – *I also not*. For James, such uses of English "[…] may be recorded countless times daily throughout Europe. It shows English being created 'on-line' for immediate communication purposes in a relatively *ad hoc* way by [its] speakers" (p. 22). In situations like this, where English is not spoken natively by any of the interlocutors, the foremost goal of ELF is clearly accomplished – communication without mediators in neutral spaces, although one can argue it flouts standards (speaker **C**), the construction of speaker **A** would probably be *I don't feel like a drink (today)* if said by a NS and perhaps the interlocutors could not convey all they wanted to. But, as long as mutual intelligibility is safeguarded, nonconformity to native standards and proficiency development throughout the interlanguage continuum are the very essence of ELF. It is the European Commission (2011, p. 28) itself, who asserts that ELF "dethrones" the nativeness principle and has successful communication amongst NNS as its major goal. Two remarks must, then, be made: a) such intent does not have a practical correspondence in official guidelines for language teachers (we had to wait till 2018 to witness the first serious changes concerning language education policy documents (see section II. 5.4)); and b) there is a clear mismatch within the European Commission between what is said and done. The European Commission that speaks of dethroning the nativeness principle in 2011 is the same that sanctions Gardner's claims on the side of "correct" English, "in terms of UK and Irish native-speaker norms", in 2016. It is quite puzzling. For House (2001), "[u]sing English as a lingua franca in Europe does not inhibit linguistic diversity, and it unites more than it divides, simply because it may be "owned" by all Europeans – not as a cultural symbol, but a means of enabling understanding".

One last comment on Euro-English is in order: whether it is an endonormative or exonormative variety, it has unique features not found anywhere else, however not yet codified in dictionaries or grammars. These features are the result of an ever-growing bottom-up English use amongst EU's speakers, despite the Union's top-down language policies to support multilingualism and linguistic equality. FL schooling cannot sidestep this use because it is the learners' use too, i.e., English must be taught as it is meant to be used by its speakers. The listing that follows, although not exhaustive, showcases some of the features deemed as idiosyncratic of Euro-English in terms of lexis and phraseology, morphosyntax and phonology, be it MAE or ELF, throughout Applied Linguistics' literature by the most prominent scholars in this field of study:

- Use of EU's distinctive lexical repertoire, based on the prefix Euro- and specialised terms: *Eurozone*, *Eurosceptic*, *Member States*, *Schengen* (Modiano, 2006, p. 233);
- Emergence of false friends caused by shifts in meaning: *actual* and *eventual* meaning current and possible (Melchers & Shaw, 2011, p. 207);
- Appearance of new phrases as the result of loan translation (in this example from Swedish): *He is blue eyed*, meaning He is naïve and easily fooled (Modiano, 2003, p. 39);
- Avoidance of idioms and colloquial vocabulary (Crystal, 2003, p. 182);
- Interjection of transferred features into English: *I am coming from Spain*, instead of I come from Spain when asked Where are you from? (Modiano, 2006, p. 231);
- Overuse of high semantic generality verbs: *do*, *have*, *put*, *take* (Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 220);
- Confusing and using Who and Which as interchangeable relative pronouns: *a person which* or *a picture who* (ibid.);
- Heightened redundancy by overemployment of prepositions or overdoing explicitness: *We have to study about* and *black colour* instead of black (ibid.);
- Use of simplified sentence structures (Crystal, 2003, p. 182);

- Conflation of simple past and present perfect, as well as continuous and non-continuous verb forms (James, 2000, p. 35);
- Underuse of phrasal verbs and omission of morphological marking of adverbs (ibid.);
- Regularization of third person singular -s: s/he look very sad (Jenkins, Modiano, & Seidlhofer, 2001, p. 16);
- Use of "isn't it?" as a universal tag question: e.g., *You are very busy today, isn't it?* (ibid.)
- Omission of definite and indefinite articles where they are necessary and insertion where they do not occur: e.g., *They have a respect for all*, *he is very good person* (Seidlhofer, 2005, p. 92);
- Pluralisation of uncountable nouns: e.g., informations, staffs, furnitures (ibid.);
- Use of the demonstrative this with both singular and plural nouns: e.g., *this book*, *this books* (ibid);
- Change to an increasingly syllable-timed rhythm (Crystal, 2003, p. 182);
- Use of slower rate of speech and clearer patterns of articulation by avoiding assimilations and elisions (ibid.).

The existence or not of a clearly defined Europeanized variety of English amongst the English-using EU's speech fellowship remains controversial. However, even if these features are not yet accepted as a standard in their own right, particularly by Quirk's deficit linguistics followers, their usage is irrefutable and constitute what may be the beginning of a distinctive common core of English, intrinsic to the European speakers' context. These features epitomise the natural development of communicative norms of appropriateness and intelligibility parameters through an accommodation process amid speakers.

I. 4 – Closing the Circle: ELT in Portugal

Historically, Portugal has always had a close connection to England. In fact, the two countries share the oldest alliance in the world – the Anglo-Portuguese

alliance, first sealed in 1373[24] and later ratified by The Treaty of Windsor in 1386. Besides the mutual military assistance and security supported by the treaty, it also endorsed commercial benefits for the two nations. Converging strategic interests paved the way for English traders coming to Portugal for business purposes. At the time, they settled mainly in the northern region of Portugal, where they had a rooted interest in the Port wine industry, but nowadays the country is home to several British communities at distinct locations, especially in the Algarve. British expatriates established in Portugal that looked for a year-round mild climate, Mediterranean gastronomy, low-cost of living (as compared to the UK) and general sense of security have been steadily increasing over the past years. According to the latest Immigration, Borders, and Asylum Report for 2019[25], there are almost 35.000 UK nationals living permanently in Portugal, which makes them the third most representative foreign community in the country, slightly behind the Cape Verdean:

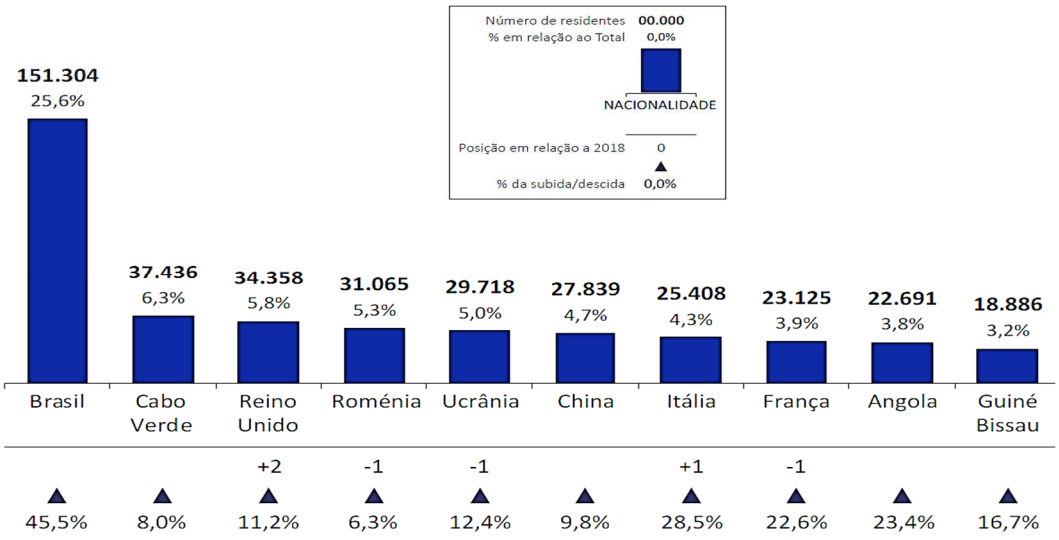

Figure 8 – Most Representative Communities in Portugal (adapted)

As it happens, in accordance with figure 8, if we are to consider EU's citizens only the UK tallies first in rank. But the legacy of the Windsor Treaty is not confined to commerce (epitomised by the British Factory House), military aid and politics.

[24] Unofficially, the partnership between the two countries began as early as 1147 when the English crusaders helped the Portuguese troops regain Lisbon from the Moors.
[25] Report released in June of 2020 by the Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service. Available at https://sefstat.sef.pt/Docs/Rifa2019.pdf.

Centuries of continuous relationship left a linguistic inheritance as well. Unwittingly, both Portuguese and British merchants traded language goods too.

Developing language contact as well as the need for efficient communication between speakers spiked the interest of both parties in understanding each other better, especially from the islanders. Curiously, bearing in mind British's colonial history of linguistic hegemony, at the beginning of the eighteenth century (1701) a semi anonymous English author (just the initials A. J.) wrote and edited the first Portuguese dictionary for English speakers in London entitled *A Compleat Account of the Portugueze Language*. Appended to the dictionary there is the *Grammatica Anglo-Lusitanica* – a grammar written, according to Kemmler (2012), for Portuguese speakers that was separately reprinted in Lisbon shortly after its original publication in London. The result of language contact between the old allies was not one-sided but of mutual influence.

Educationally, British's presence in Portugal is also worthy of attention because it played a part in English's diffusion throughout the country as well. As a matter of fact, the Oporto British School is the oldest British school in mainland Europe, founded in 1894 as a Prep school. This is a private school which follows the different stages of the British curriculum – primary (grades 1 to 5) and secondary (grades 6 to 8, the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP)). Yet there are some curricular nuances to accommodate Portuguese scholarly reality. For instance, 9th grade students also study Portuguese History for equivalency with the Portuguese curriculum in this subject. This is, perhaps, a direct consequence of the school's demographic development. In its inception the school catered to British students only, but shortly after it started to change and nowadays most pupils are Portuguese nationals, corresponding to 70% of the school's student population[26]. Faithful to its mission, the Oporto British School has contributed to English's dissemination and assimilation and, at the same time, favoured bilingualism, even though one might argue that this is not the frame of reference for Portugal as a whole, but rather the domain of the educated upper classes. Likewise, the British Council is partly responsible for the current status of English in Portugal. The

[26] Information available at http://www.obs.edu.pt/ under the heading *Our History*.

institution, founded in 1934, was created in response to Britain's weakened influence around the globe and the rise of Communism and Fascism, as was the case in Portugal. The concern over the erosion of democratic values and the need to strengthen prestige through the development of cultural relations set the tone for British Council's mission, as stated in its Royal Charter Objects:

a) promote cultural relationships and the understanding of different cultures between people and peoples of the United Kingdom and other countries;
b) promote a wider knowledge of the United Kingdom;
c) develop a wider knowledge of the English language;
d) encourage cultural, scientific, technological and other educational cooperation between the United Kingdom and other countries; or
e) otherwise promote the advancement of education (2011, p. 3).

Bearing in mind the long-drawn economic, political, linguistic, and cultural ties between Britain and Portugal, it comes as no surprise that one of the first four overseas offices opened in 1938 was in Lisbon. Indeed, the Portuguese bureau is the oldest in the world operating continuously. If at the time it opened in Portugal, the reasons underlying its genesis were more political rather than linguistic, by the late 1970s and early 1980s the British Council grew to be the most respected and reputable private English language school (usually associated with the Cambridge testing system – International English Language Testing System (IELTS)) in the territory. Currently, the Portuguese branch of British Council has six different schools across the country (three in the Lisbon area, two in the Oporto area and one in Coimbra), offering a wide range of English courses: summer courses for young learners, English for young learners, English courses for adults and Exam preparation courses – IELTS and/or Cambridge. Parallel to in-person learning, there are several free courses delivered online (FutureLearn platform) for both English learners and teachers. For the latter, the offer is supplemented with accredited courses like the Certificate in Primary ELT Teaching in Portugal for those who want to qualify to teach English at the Primary level (recruitment group 120)[27]. The

[27]Information available at http://www.britishcouncil.pt/ under the headings *Learn English* and *Teach English*.

British Council is instrumental in an increase over time in the proportion of Portuguese citizens engaged with English.

Despite the emphasis given to the UK (longer, deeper, more stable ties) Portugal also has a close connection with the USA, although far more recent, whose role on English's spread across the country must not be underestimated, especially by means of music and films. It started after the American War of Independence but has its peak during World War II when Portugal let the USA use the Lajes Field in the Azores (Terceira Island) as a United States Air Force detachment unit airbase. Again, converging strategic interests shaped the cooperation between the two countries – Portugal supports US military aircraft, the US military personnel and family members largely contribute to the island's local economy. More recently, the bilateral relationship between the two nations has been strengthened and promoted institutionally – the Fulbright Commission (constituted in 1960[28], following the US-Portugal Fulbright Commission Agreement) and The Luso-American Development Foundation (created in 1985 by decree of the Portuguese government). The former aims at fostering mutual understanding through educational exchange programmes for higher education (both students and teachers), whereas the latter aims at encouraging joint cooperation to boost economic, social and cultural development in Portugal. Unsurprisingly, English has grown to be a more and more familiar foreign language in Portugal, treading its way to become the most used language by many Portuguese right after their mother tongue (figure 9). Despite its specificities, Portugal's young learner-users share much of the linguistic exposure to English of their European counterparts – RP English at school and GA English outside of it, as well as their communicational needs. They too want to be part of this new international youth culture, who shares similar preferences displayed using English. Hence, my vested interest in understanding how speaking and intelligibility are being addressed in Portugal's L2 classrooms (research question number one).

[28] In 2015 the Agreement was updated and ratified. It was signed by the US Ambassador to Portugal and the Portuguese Minister of Education.

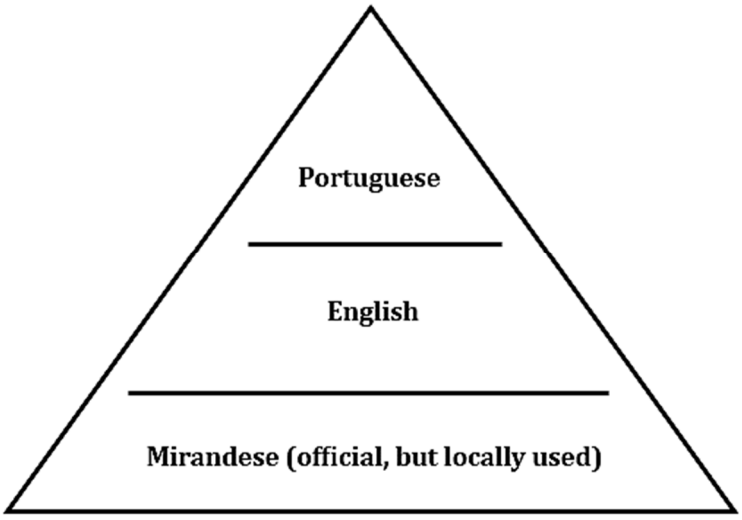

Figure 9 – Language Hierarchy in Portugal[29]

The language hierarchy suggested in figure 9 for Portugal is based on usage, status and spread. Portuguese speakers do not forfeit their linguistic national identity, they supplement it by adding another linguistic resource that will ease their way towards material and personal success instead. Like Carmichael (2002), referring to Europeans in general, I too think that in their everyday lives Portuguese "often have more than one linguistic identity. […] [And] many use different languages at work or at study, like medieval monks inscribing Latin or nineteenth-century diplomats negotiating in French" (pp. 286-287). The proudly alone motto instilled during Fascism has no bearing in present-day Portugal.

A good example of English's dissemination and assimilation throughout the country is that of Leslie (2009) who conducted a study for her master's dissertation on the spread of English in Portugal, using as indicator the frequency of loanwords used in Portuguese newspapers over a twenty-year-long period (1989-2009). Two significant findings came to light in Leslie's study: a) over the twenty years the use of loanwords has doubled or even trebled and b) more than half of the loanwords used in 1989 was restricted to the economy sections whilst in 2009 they were more evenly diffused across the newspapers' sections – economy, national and

[29] Mirandese is a minority official language since 1999 just used in and around the Miranda do Douro area. However, given its linguistic similarity to Portuguese it is often mistakenly perceived as a dialect. It has roughly 10.000 speakers and despite being encouraged by local authorities there is a lack of interest in learning it, particularly younger generations, who appraise Mirandese as a language of little worth that fails to accommodate their global needs (Euromosaic, 2006).

international news, and sports. In twenty-first century Portugal, English has gone far beyond technical loanwords or commerce jargon. As in the majority (if not all) of Portugal's EU counterparts, it is used for a variety of purposes and serves its speakers across society in a wide range of functions and domains, such as:

- Business – Portuguese companies' need to export and compete in the global economy market has led to a strong promotion of English learning/usage amongst employees. In addition, many of these companies have also adopted English names instead of Portuguese;
- Science and technology – Scientific research and scientific work publishing is extremely limited if the researcher is not proficient in English. English is the sine qua non language to access information, to partake in conferences and to submit articles[30]. As for technology, especially among Portuguese younger generations, English is used daily in all sorts of electronic gadgets (tablets, smartphones, laptops, desktops, etc.) on the internet, social networks and online gaming;
- Film and music industry – An overwhelming majority of films and music lyrics in Portugal is spoken/sang in English. In fact, Portugal has a long tradition in subtitling, thus, allowing Portuguese viewers to have direct contact with English. Like Portuguese companies, many Portuguese singers/bands have English names and even compose and sing in English;
- Travel and Tourism – The south of Portugal (Algarve) has long been a touristic destination par excellence. For decades, it has become commonplace to see restaurant menus, billboards and shop signs fully written in English. On this side of the country, using English is not a whim but rather a necessity. The large increase in foreign visitors to other parts of the country (e.g., Lisbon or Oporto) has replicated this situation. In Portugal, English is a must have asset to attract and establish solid bonds with travellers from Europe and other regions of the world;

[30] A quick search in the world's largest scientific database – the Science Citation Index (SCI), reveals the dominance of English over other languages, European (e.g., French and German) or not (e.g., Japanese), with a staggering 90:10 percentage ratio.

- Diplomacy and international relations – As representatives of an EU member, Portuguese diplomats and politicians are expected to be able to express themselves in English, which is the *de facto* default language at Brussels. The rationale here is tied to the previous section's explanation on the impact of speeches delivered on most national languages (Hungarian example). If Portuguese representatives want to be heard they must speak English at risk of no one paying attention to what they say. In the same vein, contact between governmental agencies are held in English. It is tacitly acknowledged as the governments' working language to use in cross-cultural intra-European communication;
- Higher education – Since Portugal's subscribership to the Bologna Declaration, English gained further thrust within Portuguese Universities. It is a powerful tool to promote student exchange programmes (e.g., Erasmus), increase international competitiveness and more importantly attract international students. In truth, Portuguese universities have responded to the changes and challenges of higher education. Many of these are increasing their offer of undergraduate and graduate degrees fully delivered in English, not only in the Humanities, but also in several other fields of study, like Engineering.

The growing number of functional domains in which English is used in Portugal indicates the pervasiveness of the language across the country. The Portuguese setting, ever since 1373, is evidence of the relationship between instrumentally oriented motivation, as suggested by Gardner (1985), and language spread. Instrumentality refers to perceived pragmatic gains in using English – trading, expanding a business, getting a job, travelling, achieving academic success, making friends abroad, gaming, and so forth. Considering the rationale offered at the beginning of the previous section, English's increasing range and depth in Portugal may foresee a cline in proficiency of its speakers. As a result, in the near future, if not already, Portugal can move inward from the Low to Moderate Proficient Speakers Circle to the High Proficient Speakers Circle. In truth, if we are to consider just the last six years (2015-2020) of English Proficiency Index, Portugal falls in the

High Proficiency or Very High Proficiency band consecutively. It is, perhaps, too soon to assert that this proficiency trend will continue, and the data should be looked at with caution[31], but for now the country's scores show an improvement.

In line with the rest of the EU's member-states, English's prominent current status in Portugal is undeniable, inside and outside school premises. In an upward trajectory since the late 1970s and early 1980s, English has become the number one foreign language to be taught across schools, but this was not always the case. According to Guerra (2005), English has been taught in Portugal since the eighteenth century, but it was incipient. At the time Latin and Greek were the most important languages on the academic spectrum. Modern Languages such as German, French and English were only introduced in the Portuguese schooling system by 1840 when secondary schools were created as a repercussion of the 1836 primary, secondary and higher education reforms. The curriculum had ten compulsory subjects, of which one was a modern foreign language[32]. Just a few years later the Modern Languages suffered a setback, when in 1844, at the hands of Costa Cabral, the curriculum was reorganised, and the compulsory subjects were reduced from ten to six, thus, not contemplating foreign languages learning. Towards the end of the century one of the most important reforms of the Portuguese educational system took place, envisaged by Jaime Moniz. For the first time the curriculum had a global vision developed in two different stages, encompassing the "General Course" (5 years) and the "Complementary Course" (2 years) in a total of 7 years. The new programme of studies comprised four languages, French, English, German and Latin, distributed as follows:

[31] The English Proficiency Index report is based on a self-selected online survey rather than on a representative sample of the population. Furthermore, it does not collect information about the test-takers, thus, not taking into account important social variables as age, gender, class, ethnicity and educational level.

[32] Schools that did not meet practical requirements had to exclude this subject from the curriculum (Fernandes, 1998).

Years								
Subject	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	Weekly hours
French	-	4	3	3	3	-	-	**13**
English	-	-	4	4	4	-	-	**12**
German	-	-	4	4	4	5	4	**21**
Latin	6	6	5	5	4	4	4	**34**

Table 6 – Foreign Languages across the Curriculum (Reform of 1894)

Table 6 indicates the prestige and standing of each of the languages studied. Latin is clearly the most significant of the four, not only in number of contact hours but also in span across the seven years of the curriculum. Latin was highly regarded for its intrinsic pedagogical value. On the opposite end of the scale, English was devalued, being relegated to least important foreign language. Perhaps it may be argued that the British Ultimatum (1890) is not peripheral to the neglect of English in the syllabus. In the same vein, French did not play a significant role in Moniz's reform yet starting to be learnt a year earlier. German, on the other hand, was favoured as the number one living language to be taught in secondary schools and mandatory for those who wanted to proceed their studies up to tertiary education. However, the lack of qualified German teachers undermined the feasibility of Moniz's intents. In the following years, the gap between German and English (and French for that matter) closed. The reform of 1905 stipulated French as a compulsory subject, whilst German and English were optional according to the students' interests. Simultaneously, this reform hallmarks the downfall of Latin. Yet during this period, late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the teaching of English, and all modern languages for that matter, was done through the Grammar-translation method[33], mimicking what had been the teaching of classical Greek and Latin. So, it comes as no surprise that grammar was the foundation of the classroom's work, whereas speaking had no place in it.

The next four decades did not bring significant changes to the Portuguese programme of studies, as far as languages are concerned. It was up until 1947 that

[33] For an in-depth discussion on FL teaching methods and approaches see section II. 2.

once again a major reform occurred. The curriculum for foreign languages was redesigned (see table 7) to address the imbalance of Latin over its counterparts, the lack of resources to ensure effective German learning and to reinforce French and English.

Years / Cycles								
Subject	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	Weekly hours
	1st Cycle		2nd Cycle			3rd Cycle		
French	5	5	2	2	2	3	3	**22**
English	-	-	5	5	5	3	3	**21**
German	-	-	-	-	-	5	5	**10**
Latin	-	-	-	-	-	5	5	**10**
Greek	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	**6**

Table 7 – Foreign Languages across the Curriculum (Reform of 1947)

Table 7 summarizes the changes introduced by the 1947 Reform as well as how the syllabus was reshaped. The total number of schooling years is kept but differently organised. The five years of the "General Course" now have two distinct stages – 1st Cycle, corresponding to years 1 and 2; and the 2nd Cycle, corresponding to years 3, 4 and 5. The final two years of the "Complementary Course" correspond to the 3rd Cycle. French is now the only foreign language offered in the 1st Cycle because it was perceived as a cultural vehicle which could not be sacrificed, unlike German that was completely abolished from the "General Course", bearing in mind the impossibility of teaching/learning three foreign languages plus the mother tongue concurrently (Legal Decree No. 36:507, 1947). In a similar fashion, Latin and Greek start in the 3rd Cycle. In fact, a quick comparison between the reforms of 1894 and 1947 highlights the downward trajectory of Latin in the Portuguese schooling system. As for English, its reinforcement is based on four complementary assumptions: a) the growing international status of the language; b) the long-lasting bilateral relationship between Portugal and Britain; c) the relationship between both countries' neighbouring colonies (for instance, Mozambique and South Africa) (Legal Decree No. 36:507, 1947); and d) the language's instrumentality, taking into account that

English is the "mother-tongue of more than 200 million beings and is the most important of the approximately 1,500 modern languages around the globe" (Legal Decree No. 37:112, 1948, p. 1104, my translation). Within the curriculum design of 1947 the bulk of English teaching/learning was in the 2nd Cycle, whose aims were to "to prepare students for the sequence of studies and to teach the most convenient culture to satisfy the common needs of social life, as well as to improve the intellectual faculties of character building and professional value and the strengthening of civil and moral virtues" (Legal Decree No. 37:112, 1948, p. 1103, my translation). In this reform, 3rd Cycle English was studied only by those who wanted to attend higher education, namely the degree of German Philology or the Institute of Economic and Financial Sciences (Legal Decree No. 36:507, 1947). The Legal Decree of 1948 also sets forth the linguistic contents to be covered along the three years (phonetics, morphology, syntax and vocabulary), the preferred methods of teaching (oral approach and Direct Method) and even the allowed teaching/learning materials (textbook, grammar and exercise/conversation book). This new body of laws not only changed the curriculum for foreign languages, but also set the teaching methodology to be adopted. The Direct Method differs from the Grammar-translation method in two main aspects: first, it focusses on inductive grammar work, and second, uses the TL as the frame of reference. Apparently, the Direct Method gave speaking the impetus it deserved. However, if truth be told, "it can be said that the direct method did not convey a fundamentally different view of the main goals of language instruction from that of its predecessor" (Stern, 1991, p. 459). Much of the concern is still the rules of language. The learners' speaking is, for the most part, made of short answers to the teacher's questions about any given text from the textbook after being read. What strikes me as rather odd is the adoption of a teaching method in Portugal at a time that it was becoming less and less used worldwide whilst another was gaining full thrust, that of Audiolingualism. Perhaps, this was the expected outcome of a country engulfed in Fascism. But then again, even after the Revolution innovative teaching approaches to speaking seem scarce. Indeed, even more striking is to think that traditional teaching methods still echo in contemporary Portuguese EFL classrooms, thus begging for the question if speaking and intelligibility are truly a neglected party in the Portuguese EFL classroom (research question number two)?

In the next couple of decades, no substantial changes to syllabus were made – in 1954 a few age-related changes in the 2nd Cycle and in 1969 a change in the 1st Cycle, allowing students to choose which language they wanted to study, English or French. A year before the end of Fascism in Portugal (1974), Veiga Simão launched a new reform that redefined the structure of the Portuguese educational system (see table 8). It can be argued that the 1973 Reform is the first draft of the current schooling configuration.

Level	Stages	Span	Grade
Basic Education	Primary Education	4 years	1st to 4th
	Preparatory Education	4 years	5th to 8th
Secondary Education	"General Course" (1st Cycle)	2 years	9th to 10th
	"Complementary Course" (2nd Cycle)	2 years	11th to 12th

Table 8 – Portuguese Educational System Structure (Reform of 1973)

The 1973 Reform introduces the division between basic and secondary education – the former is compulsory, whereas the latter is elective and particularly intended for those who wanted to sequence their studies and/or prepare for higher education. In line with this view, at this point, learning a foreign language is compulsory in Preparatory Education and optional in the "General Course" (1st Cycle) (Law No. 5/73, 1973). In both cases students could choose between English and French. Notwithstanding the changes introduced by this reform in the system as a whole, the English subject's syllabus was kept almost unaltered. Theoretically the focus was on communication as a means to interact with people from different linguistic affiliations, but in practice speaking and its subsets continued to play a subsidiary role, at best. For almost a century, oral proficiency was dismissed to the advantage of grammar rules and structures.

The social turmoil that followed the military coup of 1974 and marked the end of the dictatorship Portugal was under, led to intense ideological debates around the role of education for the country's overall development. The foremost outcome of such debates is the approval of the Comprehensive Law on the Education System (henceforth, CLES) in 1986, which redrafted Veiga Simão's reform establishing the framework for the Portuguese schooling system as it still is today

(see table 9). The educational fundamental principles and national policies that followed are all based in this milestone document.

Level	Stages	Span	Grade
Basic Education	1st Cycle	4 years	1st to 4th
	2nd Cycle	2 years	5th to 6th
	3rd Cycle	3 years	7th to 9th
Secondary Education	-	3 years	10th to 12th

Table 9 – Portuguese Educational System Structure (CLES – 1986)

The division between basic and secondary education is kept from 1973, but the stages in it are reshaped. Basic education is universal, compulsory[34] and free of charge, comprising three consecutive cycles in a total of nine years, whilst secondary education lasts for three years. Within the set of objectives listed for basic education, the aim for foreign language learning is "to provide the learning of a first foreign language and the start of a second" (Law No. 46/86, 1986, p. 3070, my translation). Moreover, CLES also played a significant contribution to the educational changes that took place in 1991 and were applied in the ELT curricula of 1995, whose linguistic aims were "to provide contact with other languages and cultures, ensuring the mastering of basic language knowledge and use" and "to promote communication as a phenomenon of social interaction […]" (Ministry of Education, p. 7, my translation). From these aims follow two objectives of interest to the scope of this study. Bearing in mind the acquisition of communicative competence, learners should "use the English language progressively acquiring its rules of usage with increasing fluency and competence" and "interpret and produce different types of texts, using the strategic and discursive competencies with growing autonomy" (ibid. p. 9, my translation). Although recognizing that some of the teaching procedures suggested for speaking (pp. 34-37) are limited, by asking the learners to recognize and distinguish differences between British English and American English in pronunciation, vocabulary and spelling, it is also true that others are important

[34] In 2009, Law No. 85/2009 redefined this aspect of CLES, extending compulsory education from 15 to 18 years old.

for successful spoken interactions. For instance, the use of repair and/or paraphrase strategies to avoid communication breakdowns. The question then, as much as now, is to know how learners should be expected/required to develop their ability to speak and pronounce a language (research question number three), if not given the opportunity to do so. Although no reference to intelligibility is made, as far as guidelines go, this seems to be the turning point for speaking. For the first time speaking´s importance was recognised and clearly addressed. In addition, the new syllabus called for a dramatic shift in teaching methodology, giving support to task-based learning through pair and group work (pp. 61-62). Indeed, pair and group work foster the development of oral language proficiency and intelligibility much more meaningfully, when compared to other procedures, by allowing the learner-users to explore the language in extensive chunks by themselves. However, if we take into account the teaching behaviour usually displayed by NNS teachers (see table 12, section II. 3.) we come to realise that frontal work is preferred. I do recognise that classes in Portugal are often too large, which translates in heightened worry about class management whilst doing pair and/or group work, but if we do not take chances, at least some of time, we are failing to help our learner-users to achieve the ultimate goal of learning a foreign language – speaking it intelligibly.

From this point onwards, bearing in mind the gradual decline of French as an international language, more and more students chose English in the 5th grade. In truth, towards the end of the twentieth century (1998) English had an impressive 239.465 students enrolled against French's 15.771, corresponding to more than 90% of the total number of students starting a foreign language. Shortly after the turn of the century (2005) the percentage gap just widened. By then students studying English were 237.505, whilst studying French were 1539[35]. With some slight fluctuations, the distance between English and French as the students' preferred first foreign language has been kept steady since 2005. For instance, in 2014 the figures were 216.351 students starting English in the 5th grade and 1045 starting French. As a matter of fact, Spanish is catching up with French with 846

[35] For both years (1998 and 2005), the source for the statistical data offered is the Office for Information and Evaluation of the Educational System – Yearly School Census.

students enrolled[36]. I strongly believe that this state of affairs is not just a consequence of exposure to English, but also a repercussion of the increasing emphasis given to the language in national education. The legislation introduced since the beginning of the millennium substantiates my claim. Right in January of 2001 the Legal Decree No. 6/2001 (Ministry of Education), besides highlighting the need for a reorganization of the curriculum[37] of basic education, states in its preamble "the value of further developing the learning of modern languages" (p. 258, my translation). This intent, grounded in CLES's aim for foreign language learning, is then reiterated in a specific article (7) under the heading Foreign Languages:

1. 1st Cycle schools can, contingent on available resources, introduce a foreign language, emphasising its oral skills;
2. Learning a foreign language in the 2nd Cycle is compulsory, extending to the 3rd Cycle, so as to provide students with mastery of the language through increasing fluency and adequacy;
3. Learning a second foreign language is compulsory in the 3rd Cycle (p. 260, my translation).

In compliance with step 1, four years later English was introduced at 1st Cycle schools (Legal Decree No. 14 753/2005, 2005) as an afterschool optional activity. Being an experimental year of the overarching aim to disseminate English language learning in the 1st Cycle (3rd and 4th grades), schools were given the opportunity to choose if they wanted to take part or not, dependent on teachers' availability. For

[36] The source for the statistical data offered is the Directorate-General for Statistics of Education and Science.

[37] A reaction to the identified shortcomings in the existing curriculum – unsuccessful promotion of compulsory education, feeble articulation between schooling cycles and poor effective learning – did not take long. Before year's end the Ministry of Education, through its Department of Basic education, issued the National Curriculum of Basic Education: Essential Competences (2001). This document was "the result of a long-term project which involved a great number of schools, [teachers], professional organizations, working parties, documents, meetings and reports" (Guerra, 2005, p. 15). In accordance with the principles formulated in the Legal Decree No. 6/2001, it determined the achievement competences expected for each student in the different subjects, in the different cycles and at the end of basic education. In its foreword, it is described as "a fundamental tool in the process of innovation", defining the transformation of

> the type of curriculum guidance set down for the Portuguese education system: from programmes per subject and per school year based both on the topics to teach and the corresponding methodological guidelines, to competences to be developed and types of experiences to be provided in each subject area and cycles considering basic education as a whole (2001, p. 5).

those that did so, a guiding syllabus was made available by the government through its Directorate-General for Innovation and Curricular Development. Plus, the lack of qualified practitioners for this teaching level forced a redraft (Legal Decree No. 21 440/2005, 2005) of the original law in its characterisation of teachers' profile. Perhaps, this problem should have been foreseen and anticipated by the government. At the time, many English teachers (me included) did not have the proper teacher training nor the experience to teach very young language learners. Several schools across the country did not embrace the project straight away due to this hands-on limitation. Notwithstanding this constraint, all in all the implementation of the programme was beneficial in the sense that many students had the opportunity to have their first contact with English in a scholarly environment. On this account, the government not only maintained the programme but actually reinforced it. In the subsequent academic year, the afterschool activities were expanded to include arts, music, physical education, assisted study, English and foreign languages (other than English). Yet the government determined that "school clusters mandatorily include as afterschool activities the following: a) assisted study, b) English teaching (3rd and 4th grades)" (Legal Decree No. 12 591/2006, 2006, p. 8783, my translation). In other words, from 2006 onwards all schools are required to offer English, and assisted study for that matter, as an afterschool activity (three weekly lessons, 45 minutes each). The rest of the activities are contingent to the school board's choice and/or available resources.

Consistent with the European trend for earlier foreign language learning, which in virtually all of Europe is English, two years after launching the programme for English teaching/learning in the 1st Cycle, 3rd and 4th grades, the Portuguese government decided to extend it to the 1st and 2nd grades (two weekly lessons, 45 minutes each) (Legal Decree No. 14460/2008, 2008). In a similar fashion to 3rd and 4th grades a guiding syllabus was also made available by the government through its Directorate-General for Innovation and Curricular Development, privileging edutainment tasks. However, the government's self-proclaimed success of the programme is not without critique. Two national reports, done by the Portuguese Association of English Teachers (APPI – Associação Portuguesa de Professores de Inglês, in its Portuguese nomenclature), and an International one, done by a group

of independent experts at request of the Ministry of Education, highlight some of the problems detected. For their relevance and impact, I point out four:

- The number of qualified teachers is short for the government's demand, especially after 2008 when the programme was extended to the 1st and 2nd grades (APPI, 2009, pp. 2-3);
- Some of the teachers hired through partner private companies did not have the proper qualifications to teach English determined by law (APPI, 2010, p. 3), which in turn contributed to: use of unsuited teaching methodologies for these age groups, disregard for the guiding syllabi, little use of English as the lessons are almost exclusively conducted in Portuguese, thus, wrongly de-emphasising the oral skills (ibid. pp. 6-7);
- There is an imbalance between students' English schooling years. As a mandatory afterschool activity for schools, but elective for the students, the number of English schooling years amongst them is uneven and prone to raise difficulties for both students and teachers in the 2nd Cycle (Matthews, Klaver, Lannert, Conluain, & Ventura, 2009, p. 60);
- The articulation between teaching cycles is poor and, in some cases, almost non-existent (APPI, 2010, p. 8).

I would argue that this last issue raised by APPI begged for the question then and perhaps still resonates today – What good is English in the 1st Cycle if the students' linguistic background is not taken into account and sequenced in the following levels of education?

Out of this troubled period, a new reorganization of basic education's curriculum was put into action (Legal Decree No. 139/2012, 2012)[38]. Once more,

[38] Upper-secondary schooling goes beyond the scope of this research, but for its relevance it is worth mentioning that in 2007 the assessment of speaking for foreign languages became mandatory (Ministry of Education, p. 7018), weighing 30% of the learners' final mark. In a similar vein, a quick search on present assessment criteria for 9th grade EFL across Portuguese school clusters' websites reveals a weighing of 25% of the learners' final mark. This ordinance gave speaking further legal thrust, at the time and in years to come, even though it may not have had full correspondence in the classroom. Not so long ago, Martins and Cardoso (2015) claimed that "Portuguese EFL teachers had still not found a valid, doable, practical way of having students speaking in English" (pp. 148-149, my translation). It is, then, difficult to imagine how will learners succeed as speakers in particular and academically in general, if on the one hand the focus is form, grammar rules and the printed word

English teaching/learning was further reinforced across the three cycles' curricula. It mimics its predecessor (Legal Decree No. 6/2001), but with two important subtle distinctions. Under the heading Foreign Languages (article 9) it is stated that:

1. 1st Cycle schools can, contingent on available resources, introduce English, emphasising its oral skills;
2. Learning English as a foreign language in the 2nd Cycle is compulsory, extending to the 3rd Cycle, in a minimum of five years, to guarantee an effective learning of the language;
3. Learning a second foreign language is compulsory in the 3rd Cycle (p. 3479, my translation).

In both steps 1 an 2, instead of learning "**a**" foreign language, students learn "**the**" foreign language. English is explicitly acknowledged as the number one foreign language to be taught across schools. Indeed, the modal verb can in step 1 was soon out-dated when in September of 2013[39] the Minister of Education, Nuno Crato, announced his intention to make English a compulsory subject of the 1st Cycle's curriculum, 3rd and 4th grades, starting in 2015; shortly after approving the curriculum targets for English in Portugal, 2nd and 3rd Cycles (Bravo, Duarte, & Cravo, 2013), in compliance with step 2. The Minister's intent was carried out and formally approved in December of 2014 by the Ministry of Education and Science (Legal Decree No. 176/2014). Amongst other things, this law creates a new teaching recruitment group – 120 (English teaching in the 1st Cycle) and defines: a) the number of weekly contact hours (minimum of two); b) the implementation's timeline (2015 – 3rd grade, 2016 – 4th grade); and c) the total number of English schooling years in basic education – seven, "to guarantee a quality increase on the teaching/learning of this foreign language" (p. 6065, my translation). Furthermore, it also addresses the issue of insufficient teaching qualifications, pointing out the

and on the other a quarter of their final mark may be hindered. Resorting once more to the Directorate-General for Statistics of Education and Science, the latest statistics for 9th grade per subject (2020) show that English is the subject: a) with the fourth lowest average; b) with the second highest percentage of fails; c) with the second lowest percentage of improvement after failing (pp. 27-32). A positive correlation between speaking teaching practices and overall academic success in EFL is yet to be determined, but I strongly believe that they cannot be dissociated.

[39] *Público* (Lisbon), 23rd of September 2013. Available at https://www.publico.pt/2014/05/06/sociedade/noticia/crato-anuncia-ingles-nos-curriculos-do-1%C2%BA-ciclo-a-partir-de-201516-1634854

need of accredited teacher development training. Three days later a Regulation was issued (Ordinance No. 260-A/2014, 2014), determining what needed to be done by 1st, 2nd and 3rd Cycles teachers to fulfil the requirements to teach English in the 1st Cycle. The first master's degree in English for the 1st Cycle started in 2015. Until then there were no in-service teachers specifically qualified to teach this schooling level. The common prerequisites were having a year's experience teaching English to very young learners acquired in afterschool activities and certified C1 level expertise in English. As English teachers already, 2nd and 3rd Cycles teachers had to do one of the following: teacher development training at a Higher Education institution – 30 Credits or CiPELT course – modules STEADY and GO (British Council). On the other hand, 1st Cycle teachers had to one of the following: teacher development training at a Higher Education institution – 40 Credits or CELTA course with Young Learners extension (Cambridge University) or CiPELT course – modules READY, STEADY and GO (British Council).

In the same vein as for 2nd and 3rd Cycles, curriculum targets for English in the 1st Cycle were also conceived (Bravo, Duarte, & Cravo, 2014). What strikes me as odd is the design and approval of independent targets for the 1st Cycle, bearing in mind the rationale presented in the law itself and the Minister's words a month earlier[40]. Both argued in favour of a sequenced learning conducive to the improvement and consolidation of the students' competences. Racing against time, the targets articulating the three schooling levels were approved in 2015, just two months ahead of being put into practice. I would say that this is quite a short period of time for teachers to analyse and interpret the document, especially because it changed the students' expected learning outcomes, in accordance with the CEFR. The new correspondence between school year and CEFR's global proficiency scales starting in 2015 till 2022 is as follows:

[40] *Observador* (Lisbon), 13th of November 2014. Available at https://observador.pt/2014/11/13/governo-aprova-ingles-obrigatorio-partir-3-o-ano-basico/

1st Cycle	3rd / 4th Grade	A1	Basic User – Breakthrough
2nd Cycle	5th Grade	A1+	
2nd Cycle	6th Grade	A2	Basic User – Waystage
3rd Cycle	7th Grade	A2+	
3rd Cycle	8th Grade	B1	Independent User – Threshold
	9th Grade	B1/B1+	

Table 10 – Correlation between School Year and CEFR's Global Scales (2015-22)[41]

The Basic User – Breakthrough

> [c]an understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help;

whilst the Basic User – Waystage

> [c]an understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance […]. Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need;

and the Independent User – Threshold

> [c]an understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters […]. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on

[41] If English for 1st and 2nd grades was to be made compulsory it would correspond to a Pre-A1 level by reason of the rationale offered in the new Common European Framework of Reference for Languages – Companion Volume (CEFR – CV), where it is described as representing "a 'milestone' half way towards Level A1, a band of proficiency at which the learner has not yet acquired a generative capacity, but relies upon a repertoire of words and formulaic expressions" (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 46).

topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans (Bravo, Duarte, & Cravo, 2015, p. 2, my translation)[42].

Briefly looking at the curriculum targets for English in basic education (Bravo, Duarte, & Cravo, 2015), the concern in closing the articulation gap hinted by the separate approval of its forerunners is easily traceable. There is a clear connection between the 1st Cycle stage and 2nd and 3rd Cycles stages by using a yearly sequenced chart of objectives and descriptors for each specific domain, allowing teachers to appreciate students' progress across the seven years of study, not only for language per se (Reading, Speaking, Listening, Writing), but also for linguistic diversity, intercultural awareness and foreign language use as a medium of communication with the outside world. Plus, they are a fundamental tool to assist teachers by benchmarking their classroom work, be it short-term or in the long run. Nevertheless, they also pose a challenge to the teachers, who need pedagogical content knowledge of the most recent curriculum changes to adapt and innovate their current teaching practices. I reiterate my earlier words on the importance of teachers' attitudes to rule pedagogical practices. Laws in themselves do not enter inside the classroom. It is up to the teacher to critically reflect upon his/her actions and the curriculum s/he is expected to master, bringing the students' potential about. Moreover, despite giving speaking equal status to the rest of the skills, the targets remain untouched by the concept of intelligibility whilst implying the NS normativity of the CEFR, whose focus is on accuracy and accent. In a similar fashion, the recent "*Aprendizagens Essenciais*" (subject's core curriculum) (2018), despite being published five months after the CEFR-CV was launched and with-it significant changes to its 2001 counterpart (see section II. 5.4.), still reflect the idealised NS norm of the CEFR instead of intelligibility, disregarding the calls for the acceptance of new Englishes worldwide. Thus, my concern as to whether present approaches to EFL teaching and learning in Portugal still reflect such focus, ignoring the ways that NNS learners approach and use the language. "If English is really to be taught for international communication, then it would seem to make sense to find out how it

[42] My translation is based on the CEFR's original English version (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 24).

is actually used for international communication, that is to say how it functions as a lingua franca" (Seidlhofer, 2011, p. 194).

I. 5 – Closing Remarks

The first chapter, in its introduction, set up a frame of reference to better situate readers of the project on the topic studied, namely speaking and within it the concept of intelligibility. Briefly, it laid bare the structure of the thesis (overall sections, subsections and the reasons for such design), its aims (including the studies' central questions), taking into account the most recent teaching paradigms as opposed to Portuguese EFL teaching practices, and its significance as the first project of its kind in the Portuguese context.

The global spread of English was then put into perspective from an historical and sociolinguistic point of view with reference to some of most prominent models for international English use, like the Kachruvian concentric circles of World Englishes, for a better understanding on English's current status. The ecology of emerging Englishes was also discussed, calling into question the notion of variety(ies) and the World Englishes itself, which in turn is opposed to the Modern Foreign Languages paradigm embodied in the English Today debate.

The uniqueness of English's use in mainland Europe is then put into perspective, drawing special attention to the mismatch between the language's form and function and the EU's linguistic policies to promote equal status amongst European languages. Due to this singularity, the emergence (or otherwise) of a Europeanised English variety, labelled Euro-English, is reflected upon. An updated framework to draft present-day sociolinguistic profile of English in Europe grounded in speakers' proficiency levels is also offered.

The final section of the chapter narrowed down the scope to the presence of English in Portugal, giving a concise account of the historical and anthropological factors that contributed the most for its spread in the country with particular emphasis to the bilateral relationship between Portugal and England. In view of the study's range as a whole, the trajectory of English in the Portuguese education system was closely examined. I conclude that what was once the linguistic underdog

is now the front runner, as English is by far the most taught/learnt foreign language in Portugal. In fact, ELT became a governmental priority within the Portuguese curricula. The body of laws approved in the last two decades boosted English's dominance over other foreign languages. It could, then, be argued that English's current status both in and out school is the result of informal exposure and formal schooling as they overlap boundaryless to influence one another. All in all, the first chapter was my attempt to put forward both the foundations of English and the study itself. Grounded in these foundations, the next chapter will concentrate on speaking and the subset intelligibility, which are the core of my research.

II – Rethinking Speaking in ELT: The Intelligibility Principle

II. 1 – Opening Remarks

English's spread and linguistic imperialism, not in Phillipson's sense of English as a killer language (2008, p. 251) but as the default language amongst speakers of different linguistic backgrounds, calls for a reflection upon oral language usage and the standards it relies on. In a world where NNS clearly surpass their NS counterparts is it acceptable, even desirable, that the latter foist their linguistic standards upon the former? I do not think so. The globalised FLT classroom aims at preparing students for spoken interaction between NNS-NNS and NNS-NS, which do not necessarily conform to, and do not have to, norm-providing models. Instead, they need to be mutually intelligible, as speaker and listener share responsibilities in (mis)communication. The predicament may lie in the mismatch between the latest research on intelligibility as the barometer for successful spoken interaction and present approaches to English teaching and learning, particularly in FL environments, that may deny the demand for intelligibility goals and perpetuate the implicit normativity of traditional teaching practices. In a fairly similar EFL context (Greece) to the Portuguese, Sifakis and Sougari's study vis-à-vis pronunciation beliefs and teaching practices of Greek practitioners showed that "[a]lthough the spread of English implies a deemphasis of NS norms, […] NS norms are still dominant in Greek teachers' beliefs about their own pronunciation and teaching" (2005, pp. 483-484).

With this rationale in mind, the chapter offers: 1) a brief historical outline of FLT in the twentieth century, emphasising CLT, to establish the context against which current teaching practices may be compared; 2) a challenge to traditional views over language ownership by addressing issues of non-nativeness and (inter)cultural awareness; and 3) a close analysis of speaking's landscape – the nature of speaking itself, the assessment of speaking, speaking's affective variables (anxiety), speaking beyond the classroom and the reconceptualization of speaking by introducing the notion of intelligibility.

II. 2 – Foreign Language Teaching in the Twentieth Century

Foreign (or second) language teaching has lent itself to be fertile ground for consistent changes and innovations in pedagogic practices, giving rise to a vast number of alleged dissimilar methods and approaches. All of them thought to be more effective than the other, as they were generally based on their self-proclaimed founder's language teaching ideology(ies). All of the contrasting proposed methods and approaches to stimulate language learning "are not just random practices but are informed by some beliefs or assumptions, whether made explicit or not, about what constitutes effective learning and how it can be most effectively induced" (Rodgers, 2009, p. 342). This means that in the future this trend is likely to continue. Thus, teachers should critically analyse emerging teaching fads, which may not entail novel classroom techniques and/or procedures but rather dusted off methodological features of earlier theoretical proposals.

For this reason, before discussing the relationship between theory and practice of the major FLT methods and approaches, the point on what is meant by method and approach must be made. It is imperative to unveil the nature of the terms to avoid an interchangeable use of different terminology. In an attempt to shed some light on the difference between the philosophy of teaching a language and the procedures to teach it, the American applied linguist Edward Anthony (1963) suggested a tripartite distinction of commonly used concepts in language teaching – approach, method and technique. The three are defined by Anthony as follows:

> Approach is a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. An approach is axiomatic. It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught. […]
>
> Method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected approach. An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural. […]
>
> A technique is implementational – that which actually takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to

> accomplish an immediate objective. Technique must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well. (pp. 63-66)

Anthony's scheme implies hierarchy – Approach → Method → Technique. Approach is the broadest of the three, influencing the way in which the practitioner envisages his/her teaching. It is not just a reflection of theoretical constructs but the embodiment of the practitioner's viewpoints and beliefs towards language teaching and learning. In truth, these values and assumptions critically shape and specify the choice of the working paradigm. Method sets and brings forth the practitioner's approach. It is the set of procedures grown out of the approach that determine which skills are to be emphasised, the content to be taught and the overall organisational practice, by spelling out the order in which the language is presented to the students. Lastly, technique is the narrowest concept of Anthony's hierarchy. Technique is closely connected to the classroom itself and is immediately visible. It can be an activity (dictation, storytelling, roleplaying, etc.) but it can also be the teacher's unique style of teaching as well. Although interdependent with the other two levels, technique may be considered independent too. Some techniques (e.g., imitation) may be found in different twentieth century methods.

Anthony's attempt to clarify and make sense of different concepts of language teaching was a commendable one; nevertheless, it was subject to heavy criticism by other scholars, as is the case of Clarke (1983) or Richards and Rodgers (2001), to whom Anthony´s formulation was imprecise, did not pay enough attention to the concept of method and did not capture the role played by teachers and students alike within the scheme. Thus, the latter proposed a refined and extended system that changed and broadened Anthony's original terms:

> The first level, *approach,* defines those assumptions, beliefs, and theories about the nature of language and the nature of language learning which operate as axiomatic constructs or reference points and provide a theoretical foundation for what language teachers ultimately do with learners in classrooms. The second level in the system, *design,* specifies the relationship of theories of language and learning to both the form and function of instructional materials and activities in instructional settings. The third level, *procedure,* comprises the classroom techniques and practices

> which are consequences of particular approaches and designs. (Richards & Rodgers, 1982, p. 154)

In a similar vein to Anthony's, Richards and Rodgers put forward a tripartite framework of interdependent terms – Approach → Design → Procedure. The main difference between the two systems is that Richards and Rodgers's division is encapsulated in the overall concept of method, which they considered "an umbrella term for the specification and interrelation of theory and practice" (1982, p. 154). Although broader in its reach, Richards and Rodgers's division is not so different from that of Anthony's. As Richards and Rodgers themselves state (2001, p. 20), their definition of approach follows Anthony's. In both models it is the theoretical axiom(s) determining what constitutes language, language teaching and language learning. Anthony's method is paralleled by Richards and Rodgers's more extensive design. In compliance with their critique to Anthony's method, design specifies objectives, language content, tasks, teacher roles, learner roles and materials. Finally, technique has its counterpart in procedure. Both terms refer to the actual practices and activities employed in the classroom.

Richards and Rodgers's model is recognisably more comprehensive than the one suggested by Anthony, but not only does it overlap Anthony's in many aspects as it proceeds to fall into the trap it attempts to uncover. Indeed, the self-proclaimed try to clarify Anthony's terms is not so clear after all. Taking as an example the operational definition of design at the level of language content – "Design considerations thus deal with assumptions about the content and the context for teaching and learning […]" (Richards & Rodgers, 1982, p. 158) – one may ask if such (theoretical) assumptions would not fall within the scope of approach instead of design? The fuzziness entailed in the definitions carry the risk of misinterpretation. Pennycook (1989), on the other hand, claims that Richards and Rodgers endeavour "to fit disparate concepts into their framework", while "[i]n many instances, their attempts to demonstrate conceptual unity for methods do not seem justifiable" (p. 602). However, if truth be told, Richards and Rodgers's framework is often employed and used as token in the field of applied linguistics. Perhaps, one of the main reasons for its influence and popularity is its inclusion in several prominent applied linguists (H. Douglas Brown, Joan Morley, Peter Strevens, to name but a few)

suggested readings in the context of methods and approaches in language teaching. Haskell's "*Bare-Bones Bibliography Bookshelf*" (1987), whose aim was to "produce a clearer set of "popular" or currently desirable volumes" (p. 37) by listing the top-ten books of major applied linguists, supports my claim. Despite the criticism, Richards and Rodgers's model has withstood the test of time. In fact, the latest edition of their book dates from 2014[43], as a result, in the words of one of the co-authors (Jack Richards[44]), of many requests from professors and teachers for a newer, more up-to-date edition. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the distinction between method and approach formulated by these scholars is so widely accepted in contemporary theory of this educational field:

> A method refers to a specific instructional design or system based on a particular theory of language and of language learning. It contains detailed specifications of content, roles of teachers and learners and of teaching procedures and techniques. It is relatively fixed in time and there is generally little scope for individual interpretation. Methods are learned through training. The teacher's role is to follow the method and apply it precisely according to the rules.

whilst an approach

> […] has a core set of theories and beliefs about the nature of language, of language learning, and a derived set of principles for teaching a language. None of them however leads to a specific set of prescriptions and techniques to be used in teaching a language. They are characterised by a variety of interpretations as to how the principles can be applied. […] They allow for individual interpretation and application. They can be revised and updated over time as new theories and new practices emerge (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 245).

In accordance with the proponent's view(s) of language teaching / learning, throughout literature, several other definitions and terms are suggested (Hammerly, 1982) (Stern, 1991) (Prabhu, 1990) (Larsen-Freeman, 2000),

[43] The first edition was published in 1986, followed by a second in 2001.
[44] Professor Richards being interviewed by Hayo Reinders about his new book, *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching* Third Edition. Uploaded online in 2014. Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlVZpcan7q0&feature=youtu.be .

particularly for the notion of method to assert its conceptual validity. From my point of view, these (re)definitions of terms are not just a quibble over terminology, but a reflection of their theoretical underpinning weaknesses. To the point that, depending on the terminology followed, method may be considered an approach and vice-versa, or even something else. For instance, Pennycook (1989) and Celce-Murcia (2001), based on Stern's and Anthony's denotation, respectively, deem the Direct Method as an approach rather than a method. Celce-Murcia goes further to name it Direct Approach, since Method, she argues, is a misnomer (p. 11). For his part, Brown refers as methodology what Richards and Rodgers conceive of method (2000, p. 170).

As both a researcher and a teacher myself, I have this to say: a) it is difficult to account for the myriad of labels, terms and definitions available; b) the explanations given for the terms are fuzzy, sometimes overlapping concepts are described as different whilst disparate ones are taken, for their apparent sameness, as redundant; c) the lack of a clear understanding of the concepts is conducive to a haphazard use in the classroom; d) such a state of affairs just widens the gap between theory and everyday classroom practice. Thus, I advocate a simpler, more practical organisation based on theoretical principles and classroom procedures. An organisation that does not imply a hierarchy between theorist and teacher, academic theorising and teaching practice. My suggestion is not new, it follows much of Kumaravadivelu's rationale (2006). So, theoretical principles are the "set of insights derived from theoretical and applied linguistics, cognitive psychology, information sciences, and other allied disciplines that provide theoretical bases for the study of language learning, language planning, and language teaching", while classroom procedures are the "set of teaching strategies adopted/adapted by the teacher in order to accomplish the stated and unstated, short- and long-term goals of language learning and teaching in the classroom" (p. 89). I envisage these procedures free from any prescriptions on how language teaching / learning should be organised in the classroom, as they reflect its dynamic nature. The theoretical principles that supplement classroom procedures parallel such dynamism, being meddled with by the teacher, governed by his/her own teaching experience, to accommodate students' individual and collective needs, local pedagogic environments, socio-cultural idiosyncrasies and political circumstances. As a matter

of fact, reporting on what I have witnessed first-hand in others and myself, many challenges of the FL classroom to activate the learning process are dealt with and solved resorting to the teacher's practical knowledge, experience, personality and intuition. Besides, the multiple roles played by the teacher in present-day schools, researcher, materials producer and sometimes syllabus designer even, calls for a balance between theoretical principles and classroom procedures instead of a hierarchy. Each supplements the other and both comply to what the teaching context dictates.

Reiterating the first paragraph of this section, FLT in the twentieth century was characterized by a quest to find more effective ways of teaching, opening the gateway for the rise and fall of several methods and approaches in correlation with emerging language instruction vogues. Some became more popular and prominent than others, but all shared the common premise of presenting themselves as the next big thing in language teaching. Indeed, they were offered as the panacea to the complex challenges faced by teachers and students alike in their endeavour to teach and learn a foreign language. The following is a thumbnail description of the most widely used methods and approaches for the last one hundred years.

The Grammar-translation method is considered to be the genesis of L2 teaching, although concerns with FLT may be traced back to the seventeenth century. Johann Amos Comenius is perhaps the most famous scholar and language teacher of this period. The Grammar-translation method was widely used in the nineteenth century as an extension from the teaching of classical Greek and Latin to the teaching of modern languages. This Renaissance view of language instruction and acquisition held sway up until the 1940s. Its driving force was form and accuracy, firming an emphasis on literary writing whilst the oral skills were completely dismissed. As the name itself suggests the underpinning work was grammar teaching, usually through translations, and the communicative vehicle was the students' mother tongue, instead of the TL. Thus, learning was centred on writing and reproducing and translating documents, there was not any effective communication whatsoever using L2 (Stern, 1991, p. 455). Krashen depicts the kind of tasks learners would often perform with this method:

(1) Explanation of a grammar rule, with example sentences.

(2) Vocabulary, [*sic*] presented in the form of a bilingual list.

(3) A reading selection, emphasizing the rule presented in (1) above and the vocabulary presented in (2)

(4) Exercises designed to provide practice on the grammar and vocabulary of the lesson. These exercises emphasize the conscious control of structure ("focus on", in the sense of Krashen and Seliger, 1975) and include translation in both directions, from L1 to L2 and L2 to L1 (2009, p. 127).

The Grammar-translation method ignored listening and speaking alike, learning the grammatical system based on the student's book was considered enough. The teacher was the epicentre of a lesson were memory drills, fill in the blanks exercises and translations ruled. So many years later it is interesting to realise that Portugal´s classroom teaching practices still have some resemblance embedded in this methodology. What is even more striking is the use of some patterns rejected by modern scholars who found no legitimacy for its application – "[…] it has no advocates. It is a method for which there is no theory. There is no literature that offers a rationale or justification for it or that attempts to relate it to issues in linguistics, psychology, or educational theory" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 7).

Literary texts were the groundwork of the Grammar-translation method. Consequently, the phonological component was non-existent, either segmental or suprasegmental features of spoken language were absent of the classroom. In addition, the usage of the mother tongue in the classroom between peers and teachers was the general practice. All the instructions and explanations given by the L2 teachers during class privileged L1.

Unsurprisingly, theorists from different parts of Europe, Sweet in Britain, Passy in France, Viëtor in Germany, and Jespersen in Scandinavia to name but a few, understood the frailties inherent to the Grammar-translation method, namely the formal and abstract trait of the learning process, as well as the lack of speaking or any type of spontaneous output. This group of fierce critics of the Grammar-translation method originated what has become known in applied linguistics as the Reform Movement. The reformers shared the belief that language is a spoken phenomenon and, thus, revolted against the classroom procedures implied in the

Grammar-translation method, demanding a leading role for speaking and its subsets. Pushed by the momentum of the Reform Movement a new method naturally arose from the ranks of the reformers – The Direct Method. Despite its popularity being credited to Maximilian Berlitz[45], the precursor of the Direct Method is François Gouin, whose observations of children's use of language are for the most part the foundation of the method's theoretical assumptions. Krashen (2009) summarizes the transference of these assumptions to the classroom as follows:

> First, all discussion, all classroom language, is the target language. This includes the language of the exercises and teacher talk used for classroom management. The method focusses on inductive teaching of grammar. The goal of the instruction is for the students to guess, or work out, the rules of the language. To aid in induction, the teacher asks questions that are hopefully interesting and meaningful, and the students' response is then used to provide an example of the target structure. If this is well done, it can give a direct method session the mood of a conversation class (p. 135).

The Direct Method banishes tedious grammar and vocabulary work at the same time it values TL practice over form. Embedded in the theoretical assumptions of this method there is a strong communicative component based on the students' daily needs in order to motivate their desire to use the TL instead of L1. As Stern (1991) points out, this new (at the time) methodology sets a dramatic change when compared to the Grammar-translation method. Stern continues highlighting its innovative features because "[t]he direct method was also a first attempt to make the language learning situation one of language use and to train the learner to abandon the first language as the frame of reference" (p. 459).

For the scholar Christian Puren (1988), besides teaching drives, the Direct Method served three other purposes of a more sociological essence – ideological, economic, and military:

> – **idéologiques** : l'élève formé par la méthode active, pensant et agissant par lui- même, prépare le citoyen idéal de la République démocratique. […]

[45] Berlitz himself did not use the designation Direct Method, but instead Berlitz Method. The Berlitz Method was used in Berlitz's language schools in the USA. It can, then, be argued that the Berlitz Method is like a patented spin-off of the Direct Method.

– **économiques** : cet élève pourra être plus tard l'agent économique exigé par un État moderne et puissant. […]

– et aussi **militaires**, l'idée de la revanche contre l'Allemagne étant devenue à l'époque une véritable obsession collective (pp. 67-68).

Like the Grammar-translation method, the Direct Method started to be discontinued, almost to complete disuse, due to concrete management limitations. Puren (1988, pp. 71-72) lists some of the most decisive: more demanding for teachers in two ways – it took far more time preparing classroom activities and also prompted creativity on new materials designing, bigger heterogeneous classes, non-existent teacher training in the L2 field and a very reduced number of graduate teachers capable of coping with the students' needs. Notwithstanding, according to Stern (1991, pp. 459-460), there are important aspects of this methodology that still linger in current teachers' pedagogical practices – almost full eradication of translation exercises and an attempt to keep mother tongue use to a minimum in communicative situations during L2 classes. Indeed, the Direct Method's most significant contribution to current conceptualization of FLT is the emphasis on TL use in the classroom.

Unexpectedly, World War II was the event that set-in motion one of the most influential methods in English language teaching methodology – the Army Method, later on renamed Audiolingual Method. Unlike its predecessors, whose origins can be found in Europe, the Audiolingual Method has its roots in the USA[46]. Stern (1991, p. 465) describes this method's conceptualization as twofold, it had a structuralist assumption, based on Saussure's structural linguistic principles and a behaviourist assumption, based on Skinner's psychological radical tenets. In harmony with these

[46] Despite Audiolingualism's pervasiveness all around the world, Britain's response to the decline of the Direct Method was the Oral-Situational Method. This method was the attempt of the most prominent British applied linguists at the time (e.g., Harold Palmer) to develop a teaching/learning process consistent with the need to put speaking at the centre of the lesson. Richards and Rodgers (2001) claim that not many teachers are familiar with the Oral-Situational Method, but it had a long-lasting impact "and it has shaped the design of many widely used EFL/ESL textbooks and courses, including many still being used today" (p. 36). Briefly, the Oral-Situational Method had six main characteristics, listed by Celce-Murcia (2001) as follows: "a. The spoken language is primary; b. All language material is practiced orally before being presented in written form […]; c. Only the target language should be used in the classroom; d. Efforts are made to ensure that the most general and useful lexical items are presented; e. Grammatical structures are graded from simple to complex; f. New items (lexical and grammatical) are introduced and practiced situationally (e.g., at the post office, at the bank, at the dinner table).

premises, the fundamental guidelines of this method are characterized by the acquisition of a set of linguistic habits using a mechanical repetition process grounded on a controlled sequence stimuli-answer-reinforcement (either positive or negative). Krashen illustrates a prototype Audiolingual lesson being executed to attain conversational proficiency:

> The lesson typically begins with a dialogue, which contains the structures and vocabulary of the lesson. The student is expected to mimic the dialogue and eventually memorize it (termed "mim-mem"). Often, the class practices the dialogue as a group, and then in smaller groups. The dialogue is followed by pattern drill on the structures introduced in the dialogue. The aim of the drill is to "strengthen habits", to make the pattern "automatic" (2009, pp. 129-130).

Krashen's description envisages a lesson typology where reading and writing have a subsidiary role and speaking is paramount – "while reading and writing are not neglected, listening and speaking are given priority and in the teaching sequence precede reading and writing" (Stern, 1991, p. 464). Although asserting novelty, it seems, then, that the Audiolingual Method borrows some of the theoretical principles of the method it supersedes. This is a small example of the discussion that set the tone for this section. Professed innovations during this period were often recycled pedagogical features of earlier methods. Audiolingualism's ultimate ambition was native-like proficiency achievement. Following this teaching perspective, learning situations should be carefully controlled in order to avoid error at all costs. Keeping in mind the memorization trait of Audiolingualism's pedagogy, if a mistake were not corrected promptly it would be perpetuated by the student, unknowingly though. Therefore, pattern drills naturally became the method's dominant linguistic practice and most distinctive attribute (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, pp. 59-60). In fact, the Audiolingual Method promoted mimicry instead of real language acquisition and consequently communicative ability. The dialogues used functioned as theatre-like scripts for individual and choral drilling, hardly usable outside the classroom and impossible to use to negotiate meaning.

A strong prominence was allotted to the oral skills from the 1960s onwards, yet a critical movement began to overshadow the Audiolingual Method because of

its Behaviourist and Structuralist tenets. From the beginning of the decade, they started to be considered inadequate representations of the learning process in which linguistic form correction obscured the message itself. Besides, according to Harmer (2001, p. 80), the Audiolingual Method has further issues: learning is done out of context, communicative functions are almost non-existent, subverts conversation's natural characteristics and renders a slight possibility to transfer exercises done in classroom to real-life communicative interactions. As might be expected, Audiolingualism's popularity steadily faded away. During this period, whilst the Audiolingual Method was being called into question, three alternative, less-commonly used methods developed outside mainstream language teaching – Caleb Gattegno's Silent Way, Georgi Lozanov's Suggestopedia and James Asher's Total Physical Response (TPR).

The Silent Way was a student-centred method, emphasising learner autonomy and active participation. Based on this premise, the teacher had to remain silent most of the time, thus the name of the method, or say as little as possible. In addition, silence was also perceived as a facilitator of concentration and mental organisation (Stevick, 1980, pp. 46-47), which in turn promote students' linguistic self-awareness. Gattegno believed in learning by experimentation, trial and error and discovery-learning procedures instead of memorisation and repetition drills. Of importance too in the Silent Way were the pedagogical objects it resorted to, given that they can form a link between learners and language learning. For instance, correct native-like pronunciation was elicited from Fidel pronunciation charts. In fact, one of the hallmarks of the Silent Way can be found in its paraphernalia – the Cuisenaire rods (named after their creator, the Belgian teacher Georges Cuisenaire). They were used to demonstrate grammatical structures, to show sentence and word stress, to introduce vocabulary, to represent objects, and the like. The Silent Way was then a creativity based and problem-solving method, whose leading actor was the learner while the teacher was expected to take the back seat guiding and monitoring the students' performances. Despite Gattegno's innovative organisation of classroom's activities, including its materials, and the roles played by both teachers and learners, the Silent Way incorporates some of the features of Audiolingualism (e.g., accurate repetition of sounds/sentences modelled by the teacher). Yet, in reality, contemporary teachers, me included, "could benefit from

injecting healthy doses of [the] discovery learning" principles of the Silent Way into their "classroom activities and from providing less teacher talk than [they] usually do to let the students work things out on their own" (Brown H. D., 2001, p. 29).

Suggestopedia, also referred to as The Lozanov Method, drew on the psychological, nonconscious influences of second language acquisition. Thus, it "tries to harness these influences and redirect them so as to optimise learning" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 100). Lozanov believed that states of stress, fear of failure and anxiety acted as a psychological barrier to learning, but he also believed that given the right conditions the learner's brain could process new information, i.e., knowledge of the language, better and faster. Accordingly, the physical surroundings and atmosphere of the classroom were vital for successful learning with Suggestopedia. Art and baroque music, particularly the latter, were central to every lesson by promoting a comfortable and relaxed environment for the students, who in turn would feel more confident about themselves and their ability to learn. The lessons were made of texts, readings, dialogues, role-plays, games and songs, being typically divided into three parts. The use of games and songs as effective classroom procedures in FLT is, perhaps, the most important legacy of Suggestopedia. The first part of the lesson comprised a review, usually done orally, and discussion of previously learnt topics. This segment of the lesson falls within the scope of micro and macro-studies. "In micro-studies specific attention is given to grammar, vocabulary, and precise questions and answers. […] In the macro-studies, emphasis is on role-playing and wider-ranging, innovative language constructions" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 105). Next, the lesson developed with the introduction and discussion of new topics, ideally in a high-spirited manner. Usually, this part of the lesson was conducted in the TL, but the student was free to use his/her mother tongue if necessary. The underlying theoretical assumption is not to compromise the pupil's self-assurance. The final and most iconic part of Suggestopedia's lesson was the concert session (memorisation scéance). Lozanov (2005) describes how the session develops:

> At the beginning of the session, all conversation stops for a minute or two, and the teacher listens to the music […]. He waits and listens to several passages in order to enter into the mood of the music and then begins to read

> or recite the new text, his voice modulated in harmony with the musical phrases. The students follow the text in their textbooks where each lesson is translated into the mother tongue. Between the first and second part of the concert, there are several minutes of solemn silence. […] Before the beginning of the second part of the concert, there are again several minutes of silence and some phrases of the music are heard before the teacher begins to read the text. Now the students close their textbooks and listen to the teacher's reading (p. 278).

In this kind of relaxed atmosphere students were expected to become more "suggestible" for effective learning. Notwithstanding the usefulness of some of its classroom procedures, like the Silent Way, Suggestopedia received its share of criticism. Suggestopedia's proclaimed effectiveness failed to follow through, the practical classroom requirements it envisages (classes of twelve students maximum, reclined chairs, good acoustics) were not available for many teachers, and above all the memorisation trait the method implies subverts its humanistic theoretical principles as it relies on more cognitive assumptions instead. Context and understanding of the language are subdued to vocabulary and grammar memory drills, which is not markedly different from earlier methods.

TPR, in the same vein of the Silent Way and Suggestopedia, developed around a particular theory of learning, that of Asher, to whom second language acquisition could be paralleled by children's first language acquisition. Before processing language to give verbal responses, children respond to external commands physically. Bearing in mind that Asher is a psychologist, the rationale here is intricately connected to left and right functions of the human brain. Motor movement is included on the latter whilst language production processing is amongst the former. Thus, this method was based on imperative drills that combined speech and action. The learner listens to the teacher's command and takes physical action in accordance with the language he/she hears. For Asher (1982) "most of the grammatical structure of the target language and hundreds of vocabulary items can be learned from the skilful use of the imperative by the instructor" (p. 4). Characteristic classroom procedures of the TPR method have the following sequence:

Hold.

Hold the book.

Hold the cup.

Hold the soap.

The students had to comply with the elicited physical action. Next, the teacher used the sequence to ask questions or introduce new commands:

Where is the book? (student points to the book)

Where is the cup? (student points to the cup)

Pass the cup. (student passes the cup to a classmate)

TPR was grounded on the theoretical principle of psychomotor associations, in other words, language is better memorised if related with a physical activity. Such a view of language learning is reminiscent of the trace theory of memory in psychology, "which holds that the more often or the more intensively a memory connection is traced, the stronger the memory association will be and the more likely it will be recalled" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 73). Although appealing for kinaesthetic learners, the TPR method had its limitations: a) it is an entirely teacher-centred method; b) it is particularly effective for beginners but does not meet the needs of advanced learners; c) it relies heavily on memorisation; d) it uses rehearsed language and lacks spontaneity, thus, not tying with real-world conversational demands; and e) it fails the expectations of non- kinaesthetic learners, say verbal-linguistic.

Overall, methods have made their way in language teaching/learning for the most part of the twentieth century, coming and going as a result of changing political, social and economic demands; of educational learners' needs (e.g., improved oral proficiency); of developments in theoretical learning findings in the fields of sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics; and of dissatisfactions felt by teachers and students alike with a given method in a particular period of time, combined with the marketing enterprise led by the new method's guru. Regardless of one's convictions, methods have contributed with some insights for language teaching/learning and provided a feeling of ideological

professional community. Furthermore, they also offer a safe frame of reference for teachers, especially for trainees, by setting specific guidelines to follow. Some methods (e.g., TPR) bestow teachers with lesson-by-lesson accounts. Yet one of the reasons for the fall from grace of methods is exactly their formulaic nature. Indeed, methods were rather prescriptive than descriptive. "Rather than analysing what [was] happening in language classrooms, [they were] a prescription for classroom behaviour" (Pennycook, 1989, p. 609). Neither did they pay attention to the individual characteristics of the learners, and the teachers for that matter, nor to the educational context they were set in. A second body of criticism to methods is grounded in their lack of research basis, as they tended to be anchored in implicit belief instead of a solid theoretical underpinning. Their claims over FL learning have not been proven by empirical evidence. Unsurprisingly, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, several scholars, amongst which are Brown (2000) and Kumaravadivelu (1994), declared the death of methods and claimed for post-method thinking in both the academia and schools. Giroux and McLaren (1989) went further to assert the need to redefine the role of teachers as "transformative intellectuals", which means "viewing teachers as professionals who are able and willing to reflect upon the ideological principles that inform their practice, who connect pedagogical theory and practice to wider social issues, and who work together to share ideas, exercise power over the conditions of their labour, and embody in their teaching a vision of a better and more humane life" (p. xxiii). I would say that this need still holds true today and perhaps needs to be reinforced, as we as teachers are required to transform intellectually (to borrow Giroux and McLaren's notion) repeatedly over time in order to keep up with the complexities of contemporary FL teaching and the contexts where it occurs.

Methods' weaknesses, combined with a change in learners' needs, such as increased oral proficiency, and a shift in focus from grammatical competence to the sociolinguistic aspects of language use, led to the conviction that methods could no longer respond to these new language teaching/learning demands. As a result of the growing mistrust of methods, during the 1970s and 1980s, approaches focused primarily on the communicative functions of language emerged. The most popular

and influential of these approaches was the Communicative Approach, commonly known as Communicative Language Teaching[47].

CLT and the Audiolingual Method shared the similar goal of developing the learner's FL functional communicative competence but travelled considerable different routes to achieve their intended purpose. Their contrast rests upon the theoretical principles that guide their followers' practices. While the Audiolingual Method is grounded in Behaviourism, CLT offers the ample guideline of developing communicative competence by allowing learners to engage in meaningful communicative tasks. Perhaps, this is why some scholars point out the vagueness of CLT's underlying learning theory, claiming that "[t]here is no single text or authority on it, nor any single model that is universally accepted as authoritative" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 155). In the early 1980s Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983, pp. 91-93) set forth the basic contrasts between Audiolingualism and CLT. A sample of the authors' extensive list is given in table 11 (the original numbering is kept), according to my own interpretation of the most important differences in theoretical principles and classroom procedures between the two:

Audiolingualism	**CLT**
1- Attends to structure and form more than meaning.	Meaning is paramount.
3- Language items are not necessarily contextualised.	Contextualisation is a basic premise.
4- Language learning is learning structures, sounds, or words.	Language learning is learning to communicate.
6- Drilling is a central technique.	Drilling may occur, but peripherally.
7- Native-speaker-like pronunciation is sought.	Comprehensible pronunciation is sought.
9- Communicative activities only come after a long process of rigid drills and exercises.	Attempts to communicate may be encouraged from the very beginning.

[47] Throughout the literature on this domain, though less frequently, the Communicative Approach is also designated as Notional-Functional Approach or simply Functional Approach.

13- The target linguistic system will be learned best through the overt teaching of the patterns of the system.	The target linguistic system will be learned through the process of struggling to communicate.
14- Linguistic competence is the desired goal.	Communicative competence is the desired goal.
15- Varieties of language are recognised but not emphasised.	Linguistic variation is a central concept in materials and methodology.
18- "Language is habit" so errors must be prevented at all costs.	Language is created by the individual, often through trial and error.
19- Accuracy is a primary goal.	Fluency is a primary goal.
21- Students are expected to interact with the language system.	Students are expected to interact with other people.

Table 11 – Major Distinctive Features of Audiolingualism and CLT (adapted)

Two remarks are here appropriate. As a general remark, one could argue that CLT's feature number 13 is perhaps its most iconic trait. It encapsulates the approach's vision on how to achieve linguistic system mastery, even though this view of language acquisition may be controversial amongst those who, like Krashen, advocate a stress-free learning environment. As a particular remark, what is hinted by CLT's feature number 7 is of interest. Although intelligibility is not explicitly mentioned, willingly or not that is exactly what is meant by "comprehensible pronunciation". At least, this is how I interpret it. I go further to say that, attending to the spread and status of English today, it should read "Intelligible pronunciation is sought". Intriguing though, given CLT's widespread dissemination and acceptance, is the contradicting practice of many FL teachers in their classes. Despite claims to follow CLT's theoretical principles, even in language policy statements, everyday teaching classroom procedures reflect a different stance, i.e., practice conflicts with theory. Instead of seeking intelligibility-like pronunciation goals, practitioners aim at native-like accuracy and accent. I would say they remain untouched by the developments of their profession, denying the very essence of the approach they strive for. To uncover if this is case in Portugal is one of the aims of the study, as stated in my research question number one.

CLT developed partially independently on both sides of the Atlantic but converged on its focus to promote communicative proficiency in real situations rather than on the mastery of lexical and grammatical systems. In the USA it drew mostly on Hymes's theory of communicative competence, whilst in Britain it drew mostly on Halliday's functional model of language. It can be argued that CLT has its origins in sociolinguistics (besides Hymes, also Gumperz) and linguistics (besides Halliday, also Firth), to which also concurred (language) philosophy (Austin and Searle's studies on speech acts). In addition to its theoretical sources, CLT was thrusted by pedagogical needs and concerns too. For instance, the European Council's Modern Languages Project reflected the changing educational realities that were taking place in Europe at the time. FLT syllabuses across Europe, anchored in the work of Wilkins (1972) (1976) and van Ek (1975), started to place their emphasis on the learner's communicative needs. In compliance with these needs, a set of theoretical principles supported CLT's classroom procedures:

- Learners learn a language through using it to communicate.

- Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities.

- Fluency is an important dimension of communication.

- Communication involves the integration of different language skills.

- Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 172).

Unlike its predecessors, this innovative approach sees language as a privileged way of social interface in genuine communicative exchanges able to explore to the fullest all the potential language has to offer. Now, learning procedure and message are equally important. Thus, authentic materials, TV and radio programmes, films, cartoons, newspapers and magazines' texts, letters and normative type texts, are an essential working tool to bring language closer to its real communicative functions. This paradigm shift concentrates on the student as well, to whom is asked more autonomy and ability to reflect upon his or her learning. Likewise, the teacher is asked to be a knowledge facilitator prepared to plan interesting and motivating activities for the students, designed to involve them in communicative situations

that stimulate target-language practice. As a result, learners are expected to become communicatively competent. Reflecting the ongoing transformation of CLT, mainly due to the lack of a sound theory capable of establishing an agreed upon set of practices, more recently, Richards (2006) gives an account of ten core assumptions that characterise CLT's current practices:

1. Second language learning is facilitated when learners are engaged in interaction and meaningful communication.

2. Effective classroom learning tasks and exercises provide opportunities for students to negotiate meaning, expand their language resources, notice how language is used, and take part in meaningful interpersonal exchange.

3. Meaningful communication results from students processing content that is relevant, purposeful, interesting, and engaging.

4. Communication is a holistic process that often calls upon the use of several language skills or modalities.

5. Language learning is facilitated both by activities that involve inductive or discovery learning of underlying rules of language use and organization, as well as by those involving language analysis and reflection.

6. Language learning is a gradual process that involves creative use of language, and trial and error. Although errors are a normal product of learning, the ultimate goal of learning is to be able to use the new language both accurately and fluently.

7. Learners develop their own routes to language learning, progress at different rates, and have different needs and motivations for language learning.

8. Successful language learning involves the use of effective learning and communication strategies.

9. The role of the teacher in the language classroom is that of a facilitator, who creates a classroom climate conducive to language learning and provides opportunities for students to use and practice the language and to reflect on language use and language learning.

10. The classroom is a community where learners learn through collaboration and sharing (pp. 22-23).

The fact that CLT renders general descriptive guidelines led to different interpretations and applications of this approach. Based on such distinct classroom realisations of these guidelines according to local circumstances, Howatt (1984) points to two versions of CLT – a "weak" and a "strong" one. The former refers to the process of acquiring the language's structural system and its subsequent communicative use, whereas the latter refers to the process of learning how to communicate by using the language:

> There is, in a sense, a 'strong' version of the communicative approach and a 'weak' version. The weak version [...] stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purpose and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider programme of language teaching [...] the 'strong' version of communicative teaching, on the other hand, advances the claim that language is acquired through communication, so that it is not merely a question of activating an existing but inert knowledge of the language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself. If the former could be described as 'learning to use' English, the latter entails 'using English to learn it' (p. 279).

The distinction made by Howatt between an alleged weak and strong version of CLT, based on the assumption that language use is pedagogically more appropriate for learning a foreign/second language, must be looked at with caution as it hints a categorisation between accurate and inaccurate ways of teaching/learning. I would say it parallels the distinction made in the field of psychology between explicit and implicit learning. Simply put, explicit learning refers to the learner's deliberate attempt to master the language while implicit learning refers to the learner's acquisition of skills and knowledge of the language without conscious awareness.

Amongst language teachers who advocate CLT and its theoretical principles/classroom procedures, implicit learning is usually targeted by the use of authentic, real language as the primary input. However, if implicit processes of language learning are effective for one's mother tongue, it does not seem to be the

case when a student is learning a foreign/second language. In their seminal paper on explicit versus implicit instruction, Norris and Ortega (2000) demonstrate significant benefits from explicit language instruction when compared to implicit language input. In a similar vein, Lightbown and Spada (2006), grounded on their classroom research, claim that they did not find "support for the hypothesis that language acquisition will take care of itself if second language learners simply focus on meaning in comprehensible input" (p. 176). Other educational experiments, namely language immersion programmes, are also evidence that communicative practice alone, even if meaningful, without some sort of focus on form and guided training may fail to improve the students' communicative competence. It seems, then, that the weak version described by Howatt may have its place within the communicative curriculum.

In fact, even the rather discredited Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) lesson structure, often associated with the acquisition of the language's structural system followed by the learning on how to use this system to communicate (Howatt's "weak" version of teaching), should be reappraised. This threefold format starts with the introduction of the language to be studied. The teacher explains and provides the language elements by means of a conversation, texts or contextualised examples based on any given situation to which the TL is used. During the second stage, students practice these language elements in a controlled fashion, often resorting to repetitive drills to begin with (mechanical practice – students may not yet understand the language they are using completely) and then moving into more demanding exercises like controlled role-plays (meaningful practice – students have the knowledge of the language they are using and make language choices according to that knowledge). Finally, students have the opportunity to act upon their newly acquired language knowledge by producing it in a wider applicability range, be it real or simulated. Based on my formal and informal observation of classroom procedures, it is clear that most Portuguese teachers of EFL use this version of CLT, to which textbooks are no strangers, as they are grounded in this methodological approach. Tellingly, a look at any ELT publisher's catalogue substantiates my claim. Whether we agree or not, in Portugal, as in many other countries around the world, textbooks strongly influence teachers' practices. Indeed, textbooks provide structure and a sense of security, but especially they anchor teachers, learners and

also parents in every learning stage, allowing all involving parties to follow progress along the way. It seems, then, difficult to mount a case against this tendency of over-reliance on the textbook. Furthermore, in Rubdy's words, "conflict of interests can arise between commercial agencies who view ELT books as big business and use aggressive marketing strategies […] and those committed to the choice of a coursebook simply for its value for effective classroom use" (2014, p. 40).

As I said earlier, this lesson structure was severely condemned during the 1990s because of the assumptions on which it is based. For instance, Skehan (1996) claims that there is no theory to support the PPP format:

> The underlying theory for a PPP approach has now been discredited. The belief that a precise focus on a particular form leads to learning and automatization (that learners will learn what is taught in the order in which it is taught) no longer carries much credibility in linguistics or psychology (p. 18).

whilst Lewis (1996) considers it a worthless teaching model:

> […] any paradigm based on, or remotely resembling, Present-Practice-Produce (PPP) is wholly unsatisfactory, failing as it does to reflect either the nature of language or the nature of learning. It is not sufficient to suggest that such a paradigm represents one of a number of ways in which language is learned; the fact is that the PPP paradigm is, and always was, nonsense (p. 11).

In contrast, more recent research in the field of cognitive psychology (DeKeyser, 2007) endorses the PPP format, providing ample evidence of its pedagogic appropriateness. As it happens, looking at one of the hallmarks of CLT – fluency, from the psychological dimension of language teaching methodology one can find further evidence in its support. In the field of cognitive psychology research, fluency is usually anchored in the broader concept of automaticity (subconscious automatic processing of explicit knowledge), which in turn is encompassed by the Skill Acquisition Theory. This SLA learning theory argues for a move from declarative (i.e., explicit) knowledge and subsequent practice to procedural (i.e., implicit) knowledge. The initial declarative phase of the automaticity process requires a tripartite sequence divided in the declarative input stage, the controlled

practice stage and the open-ended practice stage. This sequence is clearly reminiscent of the PPP format. So, this begs for the question – What is the difference between declarative input and presentation, controlled practice and practice, open-ended practice and production? The point I am trying to make is that some focus on language forms is not necessarily harmful nor is it a dismissal of implicit input, as both should go hand in hand in language learning. Like Dörnyei (2009), I too think that "the real challenge is to maximise the *cooperation* of explicit and implicit learning […]" (p. 36). With this rationale in mind, Dörnyei (ibid.) proposes an extended and revised approach of CLT, based on seven ongoing key guiding principles which he termed principled communicative approach (PCA):

> *1. The personal significance principle:* PCA should be *meaning-focused* and *personally significant* as a whole. […]
>
> *2. The controlled practice principle:* While the overall purpose of language learning is to prepare the learners for meaningful communication, skill learning theory suggests that […] it should also include *controlled practice activities* to promote the automatisation of L2 skills. […]
>
> *3. The declarative input principle:* To provide jump starts for subsequent automatisation, PCA should contain *explicit initial input* components. […]
>
> *4. The focus-on-form principle:* While maintaining an overall meaning-oriented approach, PCA should also pay attention to the *formal/structural aspects* of the L2 that determine accuracy and appropriateness at the linguistic, discourse and pragmatic levels. […]
>
> *5. The formulaic language principle:* PCA should include the teaching of *formulaic language* as a featured component. There should be sufficient awareness raising of the significance and pervasiveness of formulaic language in real-life communication […].
>
> *6. The language exposure principle:* PCA should offer learners *extensive exposure to large amounts of L2 input* that can feed the learners' implicit learning mechanisms. […]
>
> *7. The focused interaction principle:* PCA should offer learners ample opportunities to participate in *genuine L2 interaction*. […] (p. 41)

As I see it, this approach has the advantage of highlighting the explicit-implicit learning interface and reflecting the latest psycholinguistic research findings, thus raising an awareness on the all-important psychological dimension of foreign/second language learning. However, although recognizing that both CLT and the PCA are not meant to give answers to specific features of ELT and may apply to any FL context, in their push for authenticity, they seem to fail to acknowledge the growing number of real communication exchange amongst NNS, as their claim for authentic language appears to be based on the competences of monolingual English NS. This is where intelligibility should come into play. The goals of communication, and meaning negotiation for that matter, for most EFL/ESL students should be intelligibility-based, since this will be the communicative competence benchmark in their future linguistic lives. I consider inappropriate to foist upon students a model that is not relevant for their needs and hardly achievable in both theory and practice. To contrast the term native-speaker, Byram and Zarate (1996) coined the term intercultural speaker to reconceptualize the sociocultural dimension of communicative competence. Bearing in mind the rationale presented in the first chapter as well as the focus of this thesis, I argue in favour of the term intelligible speaker as opposed to that of native speaker. A speaker whose communicative competence is measured by his/her ability to get the message across intelligibly, not by how foreign he/she sounds nor by any given level of deviation from the native model when measured against an alleged norm-providing standard. The view I am advocating here implies a reconceptualization of the concept of communicative competence as a whole. As I hope to demonstrate throughout the remainder of this chapter, the intelligible speaker goes beyond pronunciation alone.

II. 2.1 – What is Communicative Competence?

Research in English language teaching methodology inevitably comes across the term Communicative Competence, given its notoriety and widespread study worldwide. As indicated above, CLT developed partially independently in the USA and Britain, drawing on Hymes's theory of communicative competence and Halliday's functional model of language, but it was, and still is, the terminology of the former that lingers in the minds of most scholars and teachers in this field of

study. In fact, many English language courses delivered throughout the past decades which claimed to emphasise speaking have attached themselves to the term communicative competence or to its shortened version – communicative. Originally, the concept included a fourfold organisation:

> 1. Whether (and to what degree) something is formally *possible*;
>
> 2. Whether (and to what degree) something is *feasible* in virtue of the means of implementation available;
>
> 3. Whether (and to what degree) something is *appropriate* (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
>
> 4. Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually *performed*, and what its doing entails (Hymes, 1972, p. 281).

The endorsement of the concept of communicative competence can even be found in reference language education policy documents as is the case of the European CEFR. However, this does not exactly mean it is clearly understood and applied by practitioners. Although many English language teachers today assert having a communicative teaching approach, when asked to explain in detail what they mean by communicative several of them falter. Thus, it seems appropriate to not only lay bare the communicative competence concept, but also to contrast it with interconnected, yet different, concepts, namely linguistic competence.

This especially revered linguistic pointer was first coined by Hymes in the late 1960s and introduced in foreign/second language learning discussions in the early 1970s. Hymes used the concept communicative competence to oppose that of Chomsky's linguistic competence. Chomsky's linguistic competence encompassed the NS abstract grammatical knowledge of the language, whilst Hymes's broader communicative competence encompassed grammaticality, feasibility, appropriateness and occurrence. In Hymes's view, "competence is dependent upon both (tacit) knowledge and (ability for) use" (1972, p. 282), i.e., to be communicatively competent one must combine the knowledge of the language itself and the ability to use it. Theoretically Hymes includes a sociocultural dimension that was ignored by Chomsky. Still, if truth be told, this dimension was consistently runner-up in the emphasis it received at each turning decade. During the 1970s the

focus was the functional dimension of communicative competence, in the 1980s and 1990s on discourse analysis and more recently on the role of tasks and task-based learning (TBL) for the development of global communicative competence (Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan, & Street, 2001, p. 25).

In addition to the distinction between linguistic and communicative competence, further concurring terms need differentiation vis-à-vis the scope of the study – competence, performance and (language) proficiency. In a rather straightforward way, a speaker's competence refers to his/her subconscious knowledge of the language, whilst performance is the actual observable use of the language in diverse contexts, which involves not only linguistic but also extralinguistic aspects of language: memory, distractions, attention and speech errors (commonly slips of the tongue and false starts). "The terms have come to be used to refer to what a person knows about a language (competence) and what a person does (performance)" (Nunan, 2013, p. 24).

This seemingly straightforward definition of the concepts is not without its problems. For present purposes, my biggest disagreement lies in the NS assumption it implies and resonates throughout applied linguistics literature. Perhaps this is due to the genesis of the concepts and the theory of language they were conceived upon. It was Noam Chomsky who first coined and defined both terms when he presented his standard theory in *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965). Chomsky held that

> linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance (p. 3).

This ideal speaker-listener abstraction referred to by Chomsky has its realisation in the NS, which suggests that NS are by definition competent and NNS are not, when in reality NS display varying degrees of competence just as NNS do. As pointed out in the first chapter, to be a foreign or second language speaker of English does not necessarily translate in having less competence than that of a NS. Considering the Chomskyan sense of competence, let us take, for example, the

grammatical competence. Many NS display lower grammatical competence when compared to NNS. As a teacher, I have witnessed such evidence amongst my students fairly. Finally, bearing in mind the project as a whole and the European milieu, we are left with the question of what is meant by proficiency and how the concept relates to competence and performance. The term has been used extensively by scholars, in international certification tests like the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and language education policy documents, of which the CEFR is the most influential. However, there is little agreement amongst linguists and applied linguists on its exact nature. Different people interpret and define it in many different ways.

Taking into account that the consolidation of CLT and the concept of communicative competence began in the 1980s, let us consider this decade as a paradigmatic example of the fuzziness around proficiency. Vollmer argues that "language proficiency is what language proficiency tests measure" (1981, p. 152). For Ingram, "what is meant when we say that someone is proficient in a language is that that person can do certain things in that language" (1985, p. 220). Spolsky goes further to replace proficiency with knowing a language and lists a dozen discrete linguistic items that, in his view, constitute the criteria for knowing a language (1989, p. 80). On the other hand, other scholars use proficiency as an alternative for seemingly equivalent terms. Canale and Swain (1980) equate proficiency with achievement, whilst Stern (1991), in his influential book "Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching", equates proficiency with competence. In a similar vein, so does Higgs (1984).

On the opposite end of the competence-performance dichotomy, Richards (1985) equates proficiency, which encapsulates the notion of skill, with performance, stating that "when we speak of proficiency, we are not referring to knowledge of a language, that is, to abstract, mental and unobservable abilities. We are referring to performance […]" (p. 5). It is each scholar's own view of proficiency that makes the term tip to the competence or performance side of the scale. For his part, Taylor (1988) offers an even different view from all of the above. Besides advancing definitions, he suggests how the terms interconnect. Taylor regards competence, which he describes as a static concept, according to the classical

Chomskyan notion of the "speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language" (Chomsky, 1965, p. 4), whilst proficiency, which he describes as a dynamic concept, is "the ability to make use of competence" and performance is "what is done when proficiency is put to use" (p. 166). Unlike the former definitions, proficiency is here put in-between competence and performance, not rendering itself to be either of the two.

My own understanding of (language)proficiency as a construct is partially based on Taylor's. I see it as the bridge that fills the gap between the learner-user's underlying competence and his/her actual performance in any given communicative situation, be it in educational (classroom) or real-life contexts. Competence is a rather static concept that needs to be activated by proficiency. But by static I do not mean fossilised, it is cumulative – competences are reinforced and extended over time with new knowledge acquired in every verbal exchange the learner-user engages in. Altogether, competence encompasses three intertwined dimensions: a linguistic, a strategic (includes paralinguistics and metacognition) and an intercultural one[48].

On the opposite side of the communicative continuum is performance. Performance reflects the real use of the language system by the learner-user in concrete communicative situations, i.e., an individual's observable or measurable language-producing behaviour in any given context. Thus, performance goes beyond linguistic knowledge alone, including extralinguistic factors such as memory, anxiety, distractions, attention and speech errors (commonly slips of the tongue, hesitations and false starts). Two comments are here in order. First, this means that a poor performance at a specific communicative event does not translate into limited competence. Any speaker may unintentionally produce incorrect forms

[48] Unlike what I suggest, some scholars, like Hulstijn (2011), and the CEFR (2001) draw distinctions between competences. The former speaks of core and peripheral competences, claiming "that performance in (most) oral […] language tasks is contingent, to a large extent, on more purely linguistic competences and, to a lesser extent, on less purely linguistic competences, such as […] strategic competences" (p. 239). The latter highlights the existence of general competences (declarative knowledge, skills and know-how, 'existential' competence and ability to learn), "those not specific to language, but which are called upon for actions of all kinds, including language activities", and communicative language competences (linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic), "those which empower a person to act using specifically linguistic means" (p. 9). It must be said that the new CEFR-CV (2018) further reinforces these concurrent competences. The slight difference lies in the use of the general competence's French counterpart – *savoir*, *savoir-faire*, *savoir-etre* and *savoir-apprendre*.

of the language system, regardless of his/her competence. Second, I strongly disagree with the covert, if not overt, underlying idea in FL teaching and learning that speech errors made by NS are nothing more than an involuntary, momentaneous occurring phenomenon, while those made by NNS are interpreted as synonym of low linguistic proficiency.

This leads us to the final and most important concept of my construct – proficiency. Proficiency is the learner-user's ability to activate, retrieve and contrive the necessary competence or competences to accord with the communicative situation he/she engages in, relaying this language knowledge to his/her performance. Proficiency is, then, a rather dynamic concept that encompasses the automaticity with which the learner-user can process his/her language knowledge. It overlaps as much competence as it does performance. In this vein, proficiency, competence and performance cannot be separated. Together, they form the learner-user's language proficiency. Figure 10 illustrates my multidimensional definition and attempt to lessen the ambiguity of (language)proficiency, how it (co)relates with competence and performance and the contexts where it will be applied and/or assessed in different communicative events.

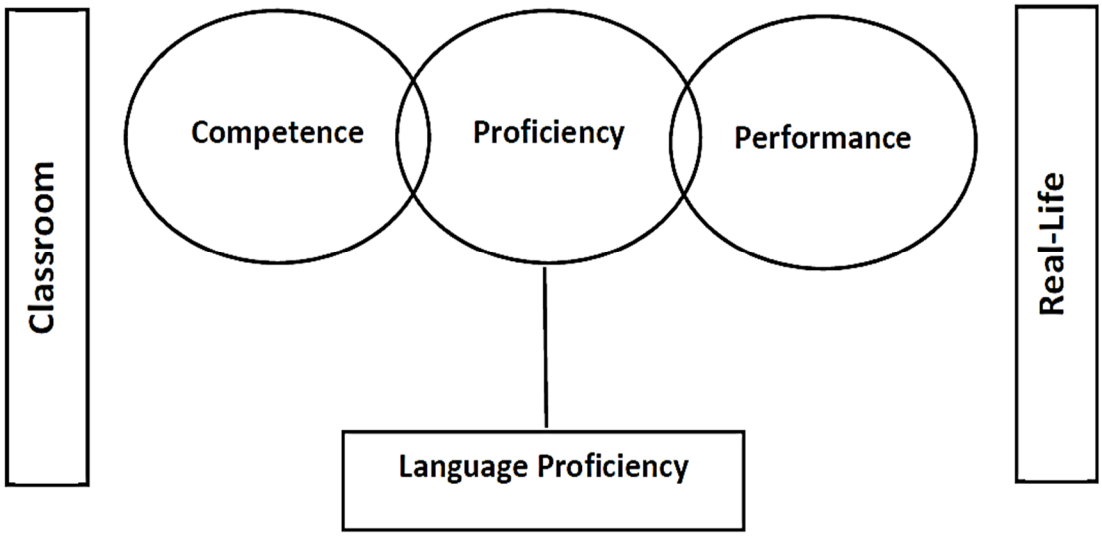

Figure 10 – Non-Linear (Language) Proficiency Framework

I argue in favour of a move from communicative competence to language proficiency as the yardstick against which the learner-user's mastery is to be measured in any given modality, for present purposes the focus is speaking, either in social or pedagogical settings. Yet I am aware that it is the notion of

communicative competence and its application to FL learning and teaching which prevails both across applied linguistics theory and classroom procedures in many a school.

Hymes's theory of communicative competence enjoyed increasing popularity amongst scholars and teachers since its introduction in EFL/ESL environments as the goal for L2 teaching and learning. In line with the consolidation of CLT during the 1980s, this was carried out by different researchers who proposed as many theoretical frameworks for communicative competence. One of them was Littlewood (1981), to whom communicative competence entails four fundamental domains of language skill:

> linguistic competence – The learner must attain as high a degree as possible of linguistic competence. That is, he must develop skill in manipulating the linguistic system, to the point where he can use it spontaneously and flexibly in order to express his intended message;
>
> communicative functions – The learner must distinguish between the forms which he has mastered as part of his linguistic competence, and the communicative functions that they perform. In other words, items mastered as part of a linguistic system must also be understood as part of a communicative system;
>
> communicative skills and strategies – The learner must develop skills and strategies for using language to communicate meanings as effectively as possible in concrete situations. He must learn to use feedback to judge his success, and if necessary, remedy failure by using different language;
>
> social meaning of language forms – The learner must become aware of the social meaning of language forms. For many learners, this may not entail the ability to vary their own speech to suit different social circumstances, but rather the ability to use generally acceptable forms and avoid potentially offensive ones (p. 6).

But it was Canale and Swain (1980), who designed perhaps the most influential model of Communicative Competence for FL learning and teaching put forward in their seminal paper "Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to

Second Language Teaching and Testing". For the authors Communicative Competence is "the relationship and interaction between grammatical competence, or knowledge of the rules of grammar, and sociolinguistic competence, or knowledge of the rules of language use" (p. 6). Besides grammatical and sociolinguistic competences, the model also included a strategic competence. Later on, Canale (1983) further expanded and developed the model by adding a discourse competence. Altogether, the model posits four dimensions to be taken into account: a) grammatical competence – the speaker's knowledge of the language code (syntax, lexis, morphology, semantics and phonology) and how to use it to express correct sentences; b) sociolinguistic competence – the speaker's knowledge and appropriate application of the sociocultural code in which the language is used in terms of role of participants, status, setting, norms of interaction, topic, register, style and politeness; c) discourse competence – the speaker's ability to use language extensively in a cohesive and coherent fashion by means of correctly connecting utterances (usually through cohesion devices) to make them meaningful; d) strategic competence – the speaker's knowledge of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may compensate competence or performance limitations and thus help to cope with possible communication breakdowns.

Thenceforth, this NS-based construct of communicative competence became pivotal for EFL/ESL teaching and learning. Unsurprisingly, Canale and Swain's original theoretical framework has been recast by other applied linguists in the following years. For their impact, I highlight Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell's (1995), Bachman and Palmer's (1996), and Savignon's (1983) (2002).

In a nutshell, Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell's (1995) model further elaborated Canale and Swain's sociolinguistic competence by adding and actional competence, which is conceptualized by the authors "as competence in conveying and understanding communicative intent by performing and interpreting speech acts and speech act set" (p. 9). As far as terminology goes there are two slight changes: a) the use of sociocultural instead of sociolinguistic competence to highlight the newly added actional competence; and b) the use of linguistic instead of grammatical competence to indicate that this dimension comprised lexis and phonology besides morphology and syntax. This model was represented by a

pyramid enclosing a circle and being surrounded by another (figure 11). Discourse is the fundamental dimension of this model and for that reason is at the centre. It is shaped by the linguistic, sociocultural and actional dimensions according to the contexts that discourse is brought into play. The strategic dimension surrounds the remaining ones. Its ever-present nature to help possible communication breakdowns is represented by an ongoing circle. It is always available to compensate the speaker's potential communicative deficiencies.

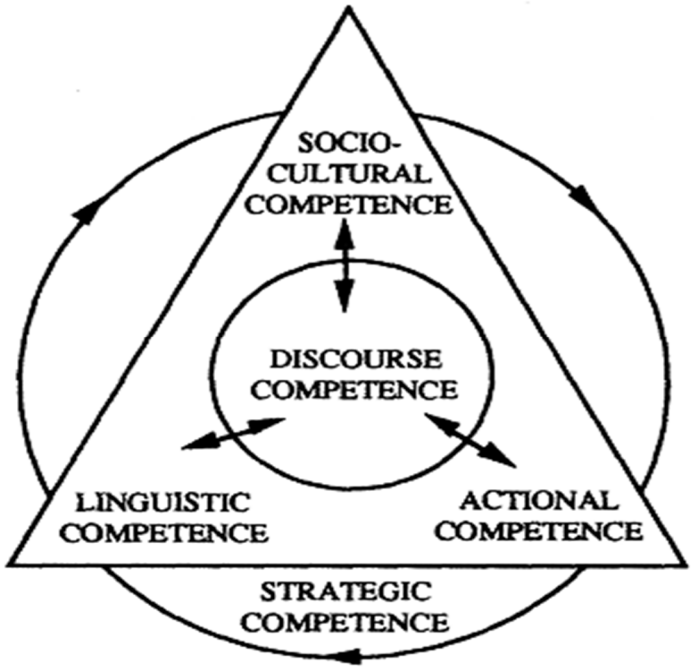

Figure 11 – Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell's model of Communicative Competence

Bachman and Palmer's (1996) proposed model of language ability (term adopted by these scholars to replace that of communicative competence) was designed within a language testing frame of mind only. Apparently quite different from its counterparts, this hierarchical, multilevel model is grounded in similar theoretical principles. Perhaps, the biggest difference lies in Bachman and Palmer's use of a dimension, functional knowledge, built from Halliday's functional theory of language to place an emphasis on the importance of being able to correctly interpret the language user's communicative intentions, i.e., to have illocutionary competence.

There are two major components in this theoretical framework – language knowledge and metacognitive strategies. Language knowledge comprises two other broad categories – organisational knowledge, further broken down into grammatical knowledge and textual knowledge, and pragmatic knowledge, further broken down into functional knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge. Bachman and Palmer (1996) summarize this strand of language ability in the following manner:

> Language knowledge, which is information specific to language use that is stored in memory, includes both organisational knowledge and pragmatic knowledge. Organisational knowledge, which includes grammatical knowledge and textual knowledge, enables language users to create and interpret utterances or sentences that are grammatically accurate, and to combine these to form texts, either oral or written, that are cohesive and rhetorically or conversationally organized. Pragmatic knowledge, which includes functional knowledge and sociolinguistic knowledge, enables language users to relate words, utterances, and texts to concepts, communicative goals, and the features of the language use setting (p. 76).

On the other hand, metacognitive strategies, which are considered "executive processes" by Bachman and Palmer (1996, p. 79), comprise goal-setting (deciding what is going to be done), assessment (review of what is needed, what is available to work with, and how well one has done), and planning (managing the ready-to-use knowledge). Even though language knowledge and metacognitive strategies are two separate strands they inevitably interrelate with each other, forming an interactional framework of language use.

In the same vein of Canale and Swain, Savignon (1983) (2002) proposed a communicative competence classroom model made of four dimensions – grammatical competence, sociocultural competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. Savignon sets its elements forth in schematic form using her inverted pyramid (figure 12). The grammatical, discourse and strategic competences of Savignon's model are identical matches of their counterparts in Canale and Swain. For that reason, I will not repeat the definitions offered above. In fact, Savignon asserts (2002, p. 3) that Canale and Swain's strategic competence

draws on her earlier work (1972) in FLT, a study of adult classroom acquisition of French which focused on communication strategies.

Yet Savignon's sociocultural competence has a broader scope than that of Canale and Swain's sociolinguistic competence. It is "an interdisciplinary field of inquiry having to do with the social rules of language use" and thus "requires an understanding of the social context in which language is used" (Savignon, 2002, p. 9). Savignon extends this dimension of communicative competence to include the ability to communicate effectively in accordance with the context. The rules of appropriateness, turn-taking, content, silence, style, tone, non-verbal communication, and the like, are here perceived as context-dependent. This particular consciousness about the importance of potential cultural differences in conventions of language use by the speaker may be subsumed, claims Savignon (2002), under the purview of cultural awareness or cultural flexibility. Savignon's theoretical apparatus for sociocultural competence stresses the need to specify relevant aspects of the individual and the contexts of language in which he/she will engage in when defining the construct of communicative competence.

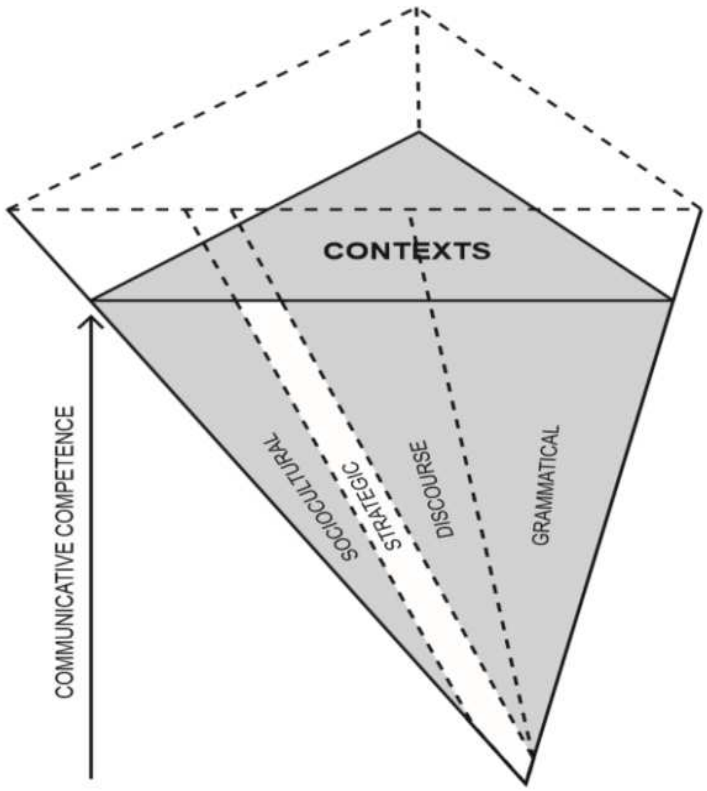

Figure 12 – Savignon's components of Communicative Competence

The levels of competence outlined in this model are intertwined and each one plays an essential role. They are integrated into a linguistic system that together forms the user's overall level of communicative competence. So, it is impossible to develop or measure a single competence in isolation. "When an increase occurs in one area, that component interacts with other components to produce a corresponding increase in overall communicative competence" (Savignon, 2002, p. 8). The more efficiently each competence operates, the more developed the knowledge of language use gets.

I believe that the framework's longevity has its basis on the integrative trait it shows, comprising all relevant aspects of (spoken) language, despite the occasion it is brought into play. Thus, all constituents are stressed, otherwise classroom/real-life communicative engagement may be undermined. Learners' communicative competence is measured by their ability to judiciously interact with one or more interlocutor(s), amalgamating language knowledge with cultural, personal and social dimensions. Such a broad notion of integrative language learning clearly contrasts with more traditional approaches whose teaching tends to develop sectioned knowledge. Therefore, communicative competence has been considered to be "one of the most powerful organizing tools to emerge in the social sciences in recent years" (Saville-Troike, 2003, p. 18). However, despite recognising the merits of Canale and Swain's original construct of communicative competence and its recasts, namely the introduction of equally important dimensions of language knowledge besides grammar, I do question the model's appropriateness as an instructional goal for NNS in FL learning/teaching environments such as the Portuguese. The model implies a NS idealised linguistic and cultural standard based on a monolithic perception of what should constitute the L2 learner's expected achievement. It is worth quoting Stern (1991) at some length to illustrate my point of view:

> the complexity of the entire rule system is such that it might appear almost impossible for anyone except a native speaker to acquire communicative competence. This observation leads to the conclusion that communicative competence of a second language learner must be conceived somewhat differently from that of a native speaker. It suggests, besides

> grammatical and sociolinguistic competences which are obviously restricted in a second language user, a third element, an additional skill which the second language user needs, that is to know how to conduct himself as someone whose sociocultural and grammatical competence is limited, i.e., to know how to be a 'foreigner'. This skill has been called by Canale and Swain 'strategic competence' (p. 229).

To start with, the intuitive grasp of linguistic, social, and cultural rules and meanings are here perceived as beyond the NNS reach, thus implying that communicative competence is a landmark for NS only. Also telling is the imperialistic use of the adverb obviously, as if a foreign or second language user just for the sake of it could never achieve the language knowledge of their native counterparts. This line of thought portrays the NNS as an inferior speaker, a speaker whose only hope not to upset native interlocutors is to learn how to be a "foreigner". The label itself signals how Canale and Swain's communicative competence model has been used to downplay NNS ability to communicate. Furthermore, this interpretation of strategic competence begs for the question – Is it a linguistic resource exclusively used by NNS? The answer is a clear no. NS are as susceptible as NNS to the same communicative constraints – memory, anxiety, distractions, fatigue, attention, and even imperfect knowledge of the language system. I firmly believe that these communicative orthodoxies pose a form of forced inculturation on L2 learners.

Communicative competence is a well-established theoretical model in ELT that applies to any given modality despite two common misconceptions (see Thompson, 1996) usually associated with it, and CLT for that matter. It implies in broad terms: 1) not teaching grammar, and 2) teaching speaking only. Although acknowledging these misconceptions, my vested interest in speaking, further broken down into intelligibility, leads me to finish this section with a brief look at how this skill has been interpreted in the communicative competence context. Somewhat unpredictable, taking into account that being able to communicate orally is the ultimate goal of learning a foreign language for most students, is speaking's lack of consensus amongst scholars about its prominence within the model. For Saville-Troike "the concept of communicative competence must be embedded in the

notion of cultural competence, or the total set of knowledge and skills which speakers bring into a situation […] the oral channel will be too narrow to account for communicative competence in most societies" (2003, pp. 18, 19, 20); whereas Martinéz-Flor, Usó-Juan and Soler claim that "the proposed communicative competence framework has at its heart the speaking skill since it is the manifestation of producing spoken discourse and a way of manifesting the rest of the components" (2006, p. 147). Although recognizing exceptions, a deaf speech community for example, more often than not, either in real-life or academic contexts, communication is done through the oral channel. Trying not to sound biased, I disagree with Saville-Troike's view on the importance of speaking. In fact, considering my proposed framework of language proficiency, when the language user speaks, he or she has to display the cultural competence or the total set of knowledge and skills that Saville-Troike speaks of. As highlighted above, competence encompasses three intertwined dimensions: a linguistic, a strategic (includes paralinguistics and metacognition) and an intercultural one. It is through speaking that language proficiency manifests itself many a time. Perhaps, it is Saville-Troike's understanding of the oral channel too narrow to account for its reach within a society, whose members are accepted depending on their ability to use the communication system intelligibly. First and foremost, people are judged by the way they speak and only after by their linguistic behaviour.

Martinéz-Flor, Usó-Juan and Soler assert that speaking is key for and to develop communicative competence or more fittingly, as advocated throughout this section, language proficiency. Although sharing their view, I go even further than these three scholars by drawing special attention to phonological control, within which intelligibility is foreground. Martinéz-Flor, Usó-Juan and Soler separate speaking, which they include in discourse competence, from phonology (intelligibility), which they include in linguistic competence. As one of the most important subsets of speaking, intelligibility and speaking must go hand in hand when discussing language proficiency. My claim is grounded in the assumption that below a threshold level (yet to be determined) of phonological control, i.e., intelligibility, communication and/or interaction may come to a halt, irrespective of the speaker's competence on associated dimensions – vocabulary, grammar, and the like, thus making it such a paramount ingredient of language proficiency. In my view,

successful oral communication and/or interaction relies heavily on intelligibility. The prominence of intelligibility for language proficiency has been supported over the years by different scholars, despite the generalised lack of attention it has received in the field of applied linguistics. Hinofotis and Bailey (1980), in their empirical study on American undergraduates' reactions to the communication skills of foreign teaching assistants, concluded that "up to a given proficiency level, the faulty pronunciation of a non-native speaker can severely impair the communication process" (p. 124). Almost two decades later, Morley (1998) emphasises the role played by intelligibility in overall communicative competence, arguing in favour of an "undeniable fact: intelligible pronunciation is essential to communicative competence" (p. 20). More recently, De Jong's et al. (2012) study on the componential structure of L2 speaking proficiency revealed two significant aspects: a) pronunciation was the subset to contribute the most to overall ability for low proficiency scores (p. 8), and b) pronunciation, along with vocabulary, represented the lion's share (75%) of the speakers' speaking variance (p. 26). Notwithstanding my reservations about the onus of being intelligible put solely on NNS by Hinofotis and Bailey because, as I will discuss further ahead in this chapter, NS are not always intelligible nor is their birthplace a synonym for proficiency, it is clear that intelligibility may determine language proficiency and is a means by which language proficiency, or communicative competence following the Modern Foreign Languages paradigm, is demonstrated.

II. 3 – Linking Non-Nativeness[49] to the EFL Classroom

The perennial debate over the dichotomy between native and non-native EFL/ESL teachers is still very much alive in language teaching literature. Fairly recently (2009), Davison and Leung, referring to assessment, mention the controversy pertaining native versus non-native speaking teachers as one of the reasons to the neglect of teacher-based assessment by researchers (p. 394).

The widespread presence of English alluded to in the first chapter has been paralleled by its expansion in public-sector education. As is the case in Portugal, it is

[49] Inverted commas are not used here to emphasize the detrimental, exclusive connotation the word carries.

part of the core national curriculum in many a country, usually beginning at the primary level and, depending on students' choices, making its way up to higher education. Accordingly, an exponential demand for qualified EFL/ESL teachers has arisen. Yet despite qualifications, non-native EFL/ESL teachers play second fiddle in the ELT profession because of the assumption that NS are innately better teachers. From time immemorial, non-native EFL/ESL teachers' only hope was to emulate their native counterparts. In a recent interview (2017) conducted by Paul Dixon, Renandya recalls the zeitgeist of ELT worldwide when he started teaching – native-speakerism (p. 154), which is rooted in an ideological position that attaches greater value to NS proficiency and from there to classroom teaching competence. This figment of the ELT world is deeply embedded in a stereotypical myth where NNS are thought of culturally and linguistically deficient. This prejudicial view stems from the native-speakerism ideology, described by Holliday "as an established belief that 'native-speaker' teachers represent a 'Western culture' from which spring the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology" (2005, p. 6). I would say this ideology meets and reinforces the vested interests of NS – professional/employment favouritism and dominance in publishing houses and government agencies' educational policies. Although ideologically anchored, the fallacy of native-speakerism runs deep at the operational, pragmatic level too, because

> it provides a short-hand for what seems to be a logical relationship between knowing a language and teaching it, [connecting] content knowledge with pedagogy and with teacher identity, towards a goal of learning outcomes: that students will themselves use the language they are studying 'like natives do' (Freeman, 2017, p. 33).

Thus, does linguistic exposure during childhood suffice to establish a divide between NS and NNS of English, especially if it implies a lower status by one of the parties. From an educational perspective three questions arise – Can a native-speaker inevitably become a competent teacher? Cannot L2 non-native teachers be as efficient as their native counterparts? How much language proficiency in English is necessary to be an effective teacher of English?

Like Medgyes (1999, p. 31), notwithstanding the fact that on the one hand he gives prominence to the teaching of NS and does not consider ELF/EIL learning aims on the other, I too think that there is a language proficiency insufficiency of many non-native teachers, whose differences in teaching behaviour are language related. Usually, these differences consist of the following[50]:

Native Teacher	**Non-Native Teacher**
Adopt a more flexible approach	Adopt a more guided approach
Are more innovative	Are more cautious
Are less empathetic	Are more empathetic
Attend to perceived needs	Attend to real needs
Have far-fetched expectations	Have realistic expectations
Are more casual	Are stricter
Are less committed	Are more committed
Are less insightful	Are more insightful
Focus on: Fluency Meaning Language in use Oral skills Colloquial registers	Focus on: Accuracy Form Grammar rules Printed word Formal registers
Prefer free activities	Prefer controlled activities
Favour group/pair work	Favour frontal work
Tolerate errors	Correct/punish for errors
Set fewer tests	Set more tests
Use no/less L1	Use more L1
Resort to no/less translation	Resort to more translation

Table 12 – Differences in Teaching Behaviour between NS and NNS Teachers

[50] The correlation used here is based on Medgyes' Table 1. Perceived Differences in Teaching Behaviour Between NESTs and Non-NESTs (2001, p. 435).

In fact, teachers themselves recognise that most of their insecurities, anxieties and self-worth are closely linked to their self-perceived inadequate language proficiency (Reves & Medgyes, 1994) (Brinton, 2004) (Rajagopalan, 2005) (Mousavi, 2007) (Takahashi, 2014), even though their actual language proficiency may be higher. This sense of underachievement, ingrained in many non-native EFL teachers' minds, is a consequence of native-speakerism. Yet even if non-native teachers' self-perceived inadequate language proficiency is real, it is also true that many are able to compensate for this disadvantage because they provide a model of L2 user attainable for the students, have a better knowledge of the local educational system and share the students' L1. Moreover, given their background as L2 learners themselves, non-native teachers can also better foresee language problems, better equip their students with language-learning strategies and better develop awareness on the TL. They are double agents, as Seidlhofer (1999) puts it because "they are at home with the language(s) and culture(s) they share with the students, but they also know the relevant terrain inhabited by the target language" (p. 235), embodying the linguistic and cultural load of their dual identity. Thus, the differences in teaching practice highlighted above are not necessarily bad and much less synonym of failure. Some of them can even be considered non-native strengths over native weaknesses.

The accomplishment of a teacher must not, then, be measured against his or her nativeness. In a study carried out in Canada by Derwing and Munro concerning teacher training for ESL and EFL teachers, both native and non-native, the practicum cooperating teachers were asked to comment on their student teachers' ability. Accordingly, they

> indicated that they expect student teachers, regardless of their status, to be capable of designing classroom tasks, providing clear explanations, and successfully answering questions. They generally agreed that both NSs and NNSs can be able teachers, but only if they have sufficient language proficiency and metalinguistic knowledge along with strong pedagogical skills. The weakest students in their memory included both NS and NNS individuals. The complaints ranged from a lack of grammatical knowledge

(NSs); an overall lack of proficiency (NNSs); and weak pedagogical skills (NSs and NNSs alike) (2005, p. 185).

In a similar fashion, Llurda conducted another survey on the same topic to find out how practicum supervisors perceived TESOL non-native students aiming at becoming ESL and/or EFL teachers. (Un)surprisingly, the respondents' comments equate those stated to Derwing and Munro, namely the common understanding that "good teaching skill and language proficiency are both necessary, and for any teacher who possesses the two qualities, L1 background is inconsequential" (2005, p. 140).

It does not make sense to establish a clear-cut contrast between practitioners based on language command and consequent approaches to teaching when so many variables are at stake to succeed as a L2 teacher. Otherwise, issues like appropriate teacher training and pre-service qualifications would not have a bearing on the matter. The words of a native teacher enrolled in a TESOL Certificate course cited in Hobbs (2013) tellingly illustrate that teaching goes beyond language proficiency: "Simply being a native speaker of English … seemed barely adequate preparation for the new way of framing and packaging the English language I was being asked both to understand and to 'perform' as a teacher … I had little understanding of what I was doing […] (p. 171)". Yet, if truth be told, replacing the concept of nativeness and that of native-speakerism in ELT is a tough row to hoe. "[…] despite the criticisms, the terms native speaker and mother tongue remain in circulation, continuously insinuating their assumptions (Rampton, 1990, p. 98). But, although tough, I believe this ideology is mutable. Indeed, the change in terminology offered by the CEFR-CV (see appendix C below) is a paradigmatic example of the shift that is taking place. Of course, it can be argued that terminology on its own does not go a long way but is important to redirect teachers' understanding of their teaching practices and, thus, question the assumed supremacy of the NS at the centre of ELT.

Some researchers (e.g., Freeman) have recently been advocating a distinction between general language proficiency and classroom language proficiency or what Freeman and his colleagues (2015) address as "English-for-Teaching". This reconceptualization of teacher language proficiency is defined as "the essential English language skills a teacher needs to be able to prepare and enact the lesson in

a standardized (usually national) curriculum in English in a way that is recognizable and understandable to other speakers of the language" (Young, Freeman, Hauck, Garcia Gomez, & Papageorgiou, 2014, p. 5). This new line of thought aims at understanding the characteristics and distinctive features of everyday classroom language used by teachers, i.e., besides general language proficiency which functional language skills are required to be an effective EFL teacher and thus properly support English learning. Such use of specialised language draws from *SeaSpeak*, a simplified maritime form of communication carried out in English between ship captains and harbour pilots for whom English is not their L1. As a construct, "English-for-Teaching" brings into play English for Specific Purposes (ESP), reflecting the particular language skills usually used interactionally and contextually in the classroom – classroom management, communicating lesson content, assessing students, giving feedback. The global profile of the classroom teacher who is expected to use "English-for-Teaching" as both the medium and object of instruction is described in the following fashion:

- May or may not use English partially or completely as the medium of instruction, although he or she is familiar with the [target language] curricular content;
- is familiar with classroom routines, including basic classroom management and teaching strategies, and can carry out these classroom tasks and routines that are predictable;
- is expected to use a defined (often nationally prescribed) curriculum;
- draws English language support from instructional materials;
- is teaching students who are at the beginning or intermediate levels of general English proficiency; and
- is expected to use English to interact with students [in the classroom]in simple and predictable ways (Young, Freeman, Hauck, Garcia Gomez, & Papageorgiou, 2014, p. 6).

The development of "English-for-Teaching" is part of a wider project named ELTeach. This self-access online training programme for English language teachers has been implemented in collaboration between National Geographic Learning and Educational Testing Service in an attempt to balance global and local needs and

improve classroom teaching proficiency. Its design includes two courses, one focusing on the functional language usually used by teachers in the classroom ("English-for-Teaching") and another concerned with English-language classroom practice and methodology ("Professional Knowledge for ELT"). On average, each course takes up 30 to 40 hours to complete, as these are individualised and self-paced, followed by an assessment. Throughout the courses, teachers may engage in face-to-face meetings and/or moderated support sessions (National Geographic Learning, 2015).

I do recognise the added value of the ELTeach project; however, taking into account the centre of interest of this thesis, I wonder if the simplified form of communication suggested will be as effective as its *SeaSpeak* counterpart when the oral skills are involved. Reflecting on the example provided for teachers' speaking tasks enrolled in the "English-for-Teaching" course – "Speaking Task: Delivers instructions in limited formulaic language to organize and manage different types of classroom activities" (Young, Freeman, Hauck, Garcia Gomez, & Papageorgiou, 2014, p. 21), the set of language exemplars furnished for each functional area and respective classroom routine (Freeman, Katz, Garcia Gomez, & Burns, 2015, p. 9) and my teaching experience, I would say that relying on such limited structures of the TL may not suffice to effectively deliver a lesson, let alone aid students develop their own linguistic proficiency. "A teacher with a poor or hesitant command of spoken English will have difficulty with essential classroom teaching procedures such as giving instructions, asking questions on text, explaining the meaning of a word or replying to a student's question or remark" (Cullen, 2002, p. 220).

Even with beginner classes how will a teacher with limited language proficiency support speaking tasks, build on and develop students' responses, model the pronunciation of words and sentences (within an intelligibility frame of mind, not native-like) and promote freer activities (e.g., pair/group work) that allow language acquisition by experimentation? On top of that, considering the dynamic nature of the classroom, how will these teachers engage in sure to happen improvisational teaching? The answer may be found in the NNS teachers teaching behaviour described above in table 12 – to avoid spoken production and/or interaction, frontal work is favoured, controlled activities are preferred, and the

focus of the class is on accuracy, grammar rules and the printed word, which translates in being heavily dependent on the textbook and its additional resources and using L1 for most of the class period. Such procedures epitomise what I have witnessed first-hand in Portugal in many English language classrooms – close adherence to textbooks, extensive L1 use (sometimes just L1 is used), an overload of grammar drills (usually done in worksheets), and some, if any, teacher-student interaction (typically the teacher questions and the student replies a short answer). This is all the more important in EFL contexts like the Portuguese where, apart from the odd exception, public school teachers have always been non-native teachers of English. For 99% of Portuguese students at the lower levels, their Portuguese-speaking teachers of English are the main source of L2 input.

A teacher's basic linguistic command of spoken English may additionally be conducive to producing incorrect language (Farrell & Richards, 2007) and lead to students' misunderstandings (Sesek, 2007). Taking into account the scope of the thesis, I highlight Sesek's words on the implications of limited phonology: "Sample 2 shows how limitations of the teacher's phonological competence can cause a setback in a lesson and even disrupt teacher–student rapport" (p. 417). Drawing on my experience, I add a third related problem – limited possibilities for extensive oral interaction (student-teacher and student-student) and, thus, to practice meaning negotiation. Indeed, several studies equate my concerns about unsatisfactory language proficiency on behalf of EFL teachers – (Elder, 2001), (Butler, 2004), (Nakata, 2010), (Richards, Conway, Roskvist, & Harvey, 2013). For their relevance and fitness for the Portuguese context being studied, it is worth quoting Richards's et al. conclusions at some length:

> teachers need to have an advanced level of TL proficiency so they can also provide meaningful explanations, rich language input for learners and respond spontaneously and knowledgeably to their learners' questions on language and culture. Teachers also need an advanced level of proficiency in order to take learners beyond the beginner level of study. This is particularly important in the high school context where learners have the opportunity to progress through five years of language instruction (p. 244).

Walkinshaw and Duong (2012) go even further to claim that "pronunciation is clearly the crux of the issue" (p. 11). However, despite my proficiency concerns, I am not implying that EFL teachers should aim at native-like pronunciation nor am I putting them at a junction between what they are and an idealised version of what they supposedly should be, make no mistake about it. Instead, what I am advocating is that below a threshold level (yet to be determined) of language proficiency, effective teaching, support, and scaffolding of communication skills may be hindered, independently of the teacher's pedagogical ability. But again, lesser proficiency is "[…] only relevant if it reflects shortcomings in being L2 users, not shortcomings in being like a native speaker" (Cook, 2005, p. 58). Otherwise, we would be falling back into the native-speakerism trap we are trying to avoid. As a matter of fact, if EFL teachers want to escape from this trap they have to realise that they can be good, not to say better, models of the TL for their L2 learners. Non-native teachers' self-perceived inadequate language proficiency (Jenkins, 2005) must be dispelled, as they are legitimate language users in and out the classroom. They are the mirroring of the Englishes I spoke of in the first chapter, which are formed by many NNS entities. What is required is a safety threshold of speaking proficiency combined with an intelligible pronunciation. Once this baseline is achieved other factors (pedagogical ability, personality, humour, rapport with students, and the like) play a part in the teacher's effectiveness.

As I see it, to have the best of two worlds in EFL teaching contexts – advanced TL proficiency and sound pedagogical practice, what is needed for most non-native teachers is to make an effort to develop the former and keep up the good work of the latter. The way to get there is not clear, but some scholars have made some suggestions on how to improve teachers' language proficiency. Cullen (2002) advocates the use of lesson transcripts, based on video recordings of classroom teaching, whilst Luchini (2004) insists on the need to integrate a language development component in degrees for prospective EFL teachers, and Nemtchinova et al. (2010) discuss the benefits of using role-plays and game activities to improve the TL command. Renandya (2017), in his interview with Paul Dixon, offers a rather different perspective. He argues in favour of extensive reading as a means to develop one's proficiency in the TL. Renandya establishes a direct connection between extensive reading and increased proficiency. In fact, the link pointed out by

Renandya correlates positively with an earlier study developed by Isabelli-García (2006) in which the difference in language proficiency outcomes between the English-speaking American students of Spanish who did not actively engage in conversations with Argentinian nationals is explained by the extensive reading of Argentinian newspapers. Although in Isabelli-García's study the TL is Spanish, the rationale is the same. It seems that extensive reading develops vocabulary, grammar accuracy, speech organisation and connectedness, and overall fluency. Some scholars, like Maley (2009), claim that extensive reading is possibly the most effective way to increase TL proficiency. Perhaps, the input hypothesis for SLA put forward by Krashen (2009) pinpoints the importance of extensive reading for improved language proficiency highlighted by both Renandya and Isabelli-García.

Bearing these considerations in mind, it is now possible to answer the questions which set the tone to this subsection with more insight. Clearly, being a competent speaker does not qualify a person as a competent teacher. Besides other assets such as experience, pedagogic appropriacy, motivation and training, linguistic skills per se are not enough to transform any given individual into a knowledgeable teacher. Inside the classroom, where language has to be meddled with to serve pedagogic purposes, to be a proficient communicator in different contexts of daily language use does not translate in being able "to identify language which is pedagogically effective" (Seidlhofer, 1996, p. 70). It is also obvious that non-native EFL/ESL teachers, despite the differences, can be equally effective as their native colleagues. They just travel different routes in order to accomplish the same goals. However, what non-native teachers do need to address on an ongoing basis is their proficiency in the TL to avoid anxiety and lack of confidence, not with regard to their ability as teachers, but to their language proficiency as speakers. I am perfectly aware that language proficiency and pedagogical ability are two sides of same coin, but not the same thing. Yet I strongly believe that the former influences favourably or adversely the latter, depending on the level it manifests in the classroom. Language proficiency, besides affecting the teacher's confidence and self-esteem, impacts on materials design and use, classroom instruction, learning scaffolding and student engagement. Faez and Karas's (2017) review of literature vis-à-vis the connection between English language teacher proficiency and teacher (self-) efficacy shows "a positive correlation between language proficiency and teachers'

confidence in their classroom abilities. […] [T]eachers who perceive themselves to have higher target language proficiency also have more confidence in their instructional abilities" (p. 145). In a world where most English teachers and their students are NNS this issue becomes even more relevant. This state of affairs leads me to reiterate that what is needed for non-native EFL teachers to be effective is an advanced level of language proficiency, based on the construct suggested earlier, alloyed with an intelligible, not native-like, pronunciation.

Difference does not call for the distinction better or worse, "a teacher's effectiveness does not hinge upon whether he or she is a native or non-native speaker of English" (Medgyes, 1992, p. 348). Both groups have strengths and weaknesses which, in the end, balance each other out. Most speculative concerns about EFL/ESL teachers' non-native status often lead to negative judgements without any rationale to support it. Instead, we should worry about the teacher training we are offering to our pre-service TESOL students, native and non-native alike, to match the needs of the cohort to be taught and the environment in which it will take place.

II. 4 – Raising Intercultural Awareness with Language Education

Globalisation used to be a popular buzz word in the pre-crisis years, usually associated with the prospect of increased wealth. For many, it was the symbol of a new epoch, and English represented the key to a promising future. But, after years of political-economic instability and international tensions, globalisation has shown its highly controversial nature. Protectionist attitudes, xenophobic policies, nationalist ideologies, the escalation of military operations, tremendous military investments, and terrorist attacks (e.g., Paris and Copenhagen) are being brought back to the fore. Thus, it is in the light of the changing international situation that the English language classroom must reassert the value of inclusive education and intercultural citizenship. In this context of struggle to deal with potentially conflicting social and cultural contrasts, English, as the world's *lingua franca*, can play a very important role as a shared medium of communication to enhance mutual understanding of similarities and differences, promote social engagement, help

negotiate conflicts and work against erroneous stereotypes and prejudiced views of the other, by promoting social and civic competences.

The advent of global citizenship in the twenty-first century has then posited intercultural education as one of the aims of FLT. This goal is amply emphasised worldwide by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in its principles:

> Intercultural Education provides all learners with cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills that enable them to contribute to respect, understanding and solidarity among individuals, ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups and nations (UNESCO, 2006, p. 37);

as well as in its indicative strategies:

> Ensure government review of education sector plans, budgets, curricula and textbooks, along with teacher training and supervision, so that they are free of gender stereotypes and promote equality, non-discrimination and human rights and foster intercultural education (UNESCO, 2016, p. 46).

In a similar fashion, in the European milieu this goal is also highly stressed by the Council of Europe:

> In an intercultural approach, it is a central objective of language education to promote the favourable development of the learner's whole personality and sense of identity in response to the enriching experience of otherness in language and culture (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1);

Teachers are now expected to prepare learners to communicate beyond the threshold of national frontiers with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, particularly within the multi-ethnic space of Europe. It could, therefore, be argued that FLT cannot confine its interest to grammar, vocabulary, or knowledge of the rules of language use, as it has hitherto. A comprehensive teaching and learning of EFL, anchored in the New Englishes paradigm, must promote cultural knowledge through the language students strive to speak. As Kramsch points out:

> Culture in language teaching is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading and writing. It is always in the background, right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners […] challenging their ability to make sense of the world around them. […] If language is seen as social practice, culture becomes the very core of language teaching. Cultural awareness must then be viewed as enabling language proficiency […] (1993, pp. 1-8).

Most of the research undertaken in this educational field has led to a myriad of labels to address interculturality today. In a research paper conducted by Fantini and Tirmizi (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006, p. Appendix D), the authors account for twenty alternative terms to what they themselves define as intercultural communicative competence, ranging from cross-cultural awareness to multiculturalism or even intercultural sensitivity. The lack of consensus amongst researchers and experts alike as to what terminology is best to use is clear, to which the difficulty in defining culture itself is no stranger. For the past decades, several definitions of culture have been brought forward (Geertz, 1973) (Triandis, 1989) (Hannerz, 1992) (Matsumoto & Juang, 2004) (Spencer-Oatey, 2008), but given its complex and dynamic nature no agreement has been reached, and perhaps never will. They do share some common ground though: a) culture is associated to social groups who share similar (even within groups, different individuals do not have the exact same cultural characteristics[51]) mental and physical representations of the world; b) culture is manifested through explicit and implicit patterns; c) culture conditions people's representations of themselves and that of others; d) culture is constructed and transmitted by interaction with others.

Bearing in mind the European milieu, I follow the CEFR's rationale and use the term intercultural awareness, which entails the

[51] Zegarac (2008) employs an analogy between cultures and epidemics to account for the differences between individuals with the same social group affiliation. "Just as an epidemic does not affect all individuals in an area to the same extent (typically, some people are more seriously afflicted by the disease than others), we should not expect all members of a culture to share all cultural representations" (p. 51). In other words, this means that beliefs and their attached values are not uniform across social groups, as individuals draw on their own interpretation of the world around them. Borrowing Zegarac's analogy, just like viruses suffer slight mutant variations so do people, although they belong to the same family.

> understanding of the relation (similarities and distinctive differences) between the 'world of origin' and the 'world of the target community' […] intercultural awareness includes an awareness of regional and social diversity in both worlds [and] covers an awareness of how each community appears from the perspective of the other […] (2001, p. 103).

For Portugal, it means that EFL students have to develop the ability to step beyond the Portuguese culture and bring it into relation with different cultures, British or otherwise. By doing so, Portuguese students will be better prepared to expand their social practice, interacting effectively and appropriately with individuals whose culture (everyday living, values and beliefs and social conventions) is significantly different from their own. Literally, the word intercultural means between cultures. Thus, the interpretation of intercultural awareness championed here asks the EFL student to act as a mediator between the two worlds alluded above, someone who is able to recognize and embrace cultural differences, bridging existing distances to avoid potential communication hindrances across contexts. Intercultural awareness is therefore a combination of knowledge (oneself and other), attitudes and acceptance of cultural diversity. Byram (1997) (2008), whose conceptual framework derives from the teaching and learning of foreign languages in schools, suggests that being intercultural involves affection, cognition and behaviour. In practice, these domains manifest themselves through skills, attitudes and knowledge (five *savoirs*):

- *Attitudes*: curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own (*savoir être*);
- *Knowledge:* of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction (*savoirs*);
- *Skills of interpreting and relating*: ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents from one's own (*savoir comprendre*);
- *Skills of discovery and interaction*: ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes

and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction (*savoir apprendre/faire*);

• *Critical cultural awareness/political education*: an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries (*savoir s'engager*) (p. 69).

Looking back, the arguments in favour of interculturality and consequent allocation to FL teaching/learning have been stressed since 2001, when the CEFR was published (Council of Europe, p. 43), reflecting the world's shrinking borders due to technology and eased mobility of individuals. However, neither one seemed to pick up momentum in Portugal. Neither the Ministry of Education nor the schools, particularly EFL teachers, appear to have given due prominence to this milestone document and reflect the CEFR's concern with intercultural awareness. Although I do not report on empirical research, my claim is grounded in my teaching experience in ten different schools for the past fifteen years, both in Lisbon and the Algarve. Without any formal training during their pre-service teaching degrees in integrating cultural elements and governmental guidelines to approach intercultural awareness, most EFL teachers have not felt comfortable going beyond curricular demands – Speaking, Listening, Writing and Reading. Those who have been open-minded enough to implement activities necessary for promoting interculturality have been left to their own imagination and rely only on their common sense.

The ministerial introduction of the new "*metas*" (targets) approved in 2013 (revised in 2015) appears to have triggered a shift in attitude towards intercultural awareness by explicitly integrating it into the national curriculum under the heading *Intercultural Domain*. For the first time, there is an overt political purpose to foster intercultural citizenship in the EFL classroom, thus allowing students to learn to live together and build relationships with individuals and/or groups from distinct cultural affiliations. The cultural impact of the new domain is described in the targets by the authors as follows:

> This is the domain where the thematic topics to be addressed are presented. The specificity of the subject, especially in the 8th and 9th grades,

> does not point to the teaching of isolated and mandatory thematic contents, but rather to the exploration of study areas according to the students' interests that can develop them as human beings. In an increasingly diverse and complex world, where English is a global language, the thematic contents aim, through descriptions and comparisons of distinct social and cultural contexts, to develop in the students the awareness of their own identity and the identity of the other (Bravo, Duarte, & Cravo, Metas Curriculares de Inglês Ensino Básico: 2º e 3º Ciclos, 2013, p. 5, my translation).

Looking ahead, such educational novelty has filled a twelve-year gap between the publication of the two documents. EFL teachers are now equipped with an important tool designed to promote and support intercultural awareness, paying special attention to the awareness of one's own cultural affiliation and respect for others who have different cultural affiliations.

The new targets are organized into domains, which in turn comprise sets of objectives (to indicate the students' expected learning achievements) and descriptors (to define the students' learning outcomes). The intercultural domain, like the other ones, shows a clear sequence of objectives set for each grade, as well as a link with the CEFR's guidelines for intercultural awareness. The targets may be consulted in two different ways, either per grade or domain. To make things simple, I would advise other EFL teachers to choose the latter in the revised version of 2015 (Bravo, Duarte, & Cravo, Metas Curriculares de Inglês Ensino Básico: 1º, 2º e 3º Ciclos, 2015, pp. 12,13) for three major reasons: first, because it establishes a connection between primary and lower secondary grades; second, because it changes the proficiency levels of 2013; and third, because it facilitates the teacher's work by using a yearly sequenced chart of objectives and descriptors for each specific domain.

More recently (2018), the *Intercultural Domain* has been further reinforced in the "*Aprendizagens Essenciais*" (subject's core curriculum) under the heading Intercultural Competence (my translation). Perhaps, the adopted terminology was influenced by Byram's (1997) conceptualization of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), whose components are linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and intercultural competence. This newly

approved document tells us that students must have the ability to "recognise distinct intercultural realities", which includes for the 9th grade "to know renowned characters and literary works from English-speaking countries; to know diverse cultural backgrounds; to identify and comment on factors that may hamper intercultural communication" (Ministry of Education, p. 7, my translation). Nevertheless, more than approving documents what is needed is an inclusive understanding of global citizenship that allows students to think, feel and act as intercultural mediators. I believe that, for now, the step forward requires a change in practice, since intercultural awareness is hardly acquired spontaneously by learners. A growing body of research shows that intercultural awareness is not a spin-off event, but instead a lifelong process which requires overt teaching and learning.

In an attempt to promote intercultural awareness in the classroom, alongside the targets, a "Caderno de Apoio" (targets' support notebook) was also issued to help teachers with suggestions of activities for five of the seven domains encompassed in the former. Somewhat surprisingly, according to the authors, "because they are transversal to the 5 previous domains, the Intercultural Domain and that of Lexis and Grammar do not appear as independent sections" (Bravo, Duarte, & Cravo, Metas Curriculares de Inglês Ensino Básico: 2º e 3º Ciclos, Caderno de Apoio, p. 3, my translation). Although recognizing the authors' rationale, I would advocate a slightly different view. Again, bearing in mind that intercultural awareness requires overt teaching and learning, relying on transversality alone may not be enough to achieve the intended learning outcomes. It would have been helpful to include some specific activities to address the *Intercultural Domain*. Besides, given the newness of this domain, without any pointers some teachers may struggle to understand how to address it properly.

As it happens, a national online survey I conducted (June 2018[52]) about the new targets in general and the *Intercultural Domain* in particular suggests that

[52] The survey and its results were reported at the Seventh International Conference on Teaching English as a Foreign Language (9-10 November), held at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (Lisbon), as part of a talk entitled "Intercultural Education and the New 'Metas' –Where are we at?". The conference's aggregating topic was "Intercultural Language Education for Increased European Identity and Cohesion". The survey platform used was Google Forms. In total, 178 Portuguese EFL teachers' responses were validated.

almost half of the respondents (47,7%) fail to grasp the guidelines offered, considering them either unclear or little clear. So, the question is – how can teachers help students if they do not know what they are doing to begin with? This is not a matter of willingness but one of know-how. Indeed, 68% of the teachers say it is either very important or imperative to integrate interculturality into their teaching. Yet, their pedagogic practice in the classroom seems to be a whole different affair. To the question How many classes, per term, do you allot to intercultural awareness, almost a quarter of teachers (24,6%) answered 0-1. This means that thousands of Portuguese EFL students may undergo a full school year with no overt sequenced learning on intercultural awareness. To make things worse, if we correlate these answers with the fact that a massive 138 teachers, who do dedicate some classes during each term to intercultural awareness, claim to use the textbook and its (digital) resources, the picture is gloomy.

Raising intercultural awareness is, then, dependent and determined by the textbook. As a result, it is left to chance, being randomly omitted or included. On the other hand, if included, what is being promoted is not intercultural awareness but instead the acquisition of knowledge about culture, which tends to be rather superficial. Usually, a few facts about the target countries (mainly the UK and the USA) and some cultural trivia (known as big "C" culture) are offered. Drawing on Edward T. Hall's (1976) iceberg analogy of culture, it is fair comment to assert that many students only know what is above the water line, remaining oblivious to the submerged portion of the iceberg (known as little "c" culture) – deeply rooted ideas passed on from generation to generation on topics like the concept of time, attitudes toward elders, notions of politeness, tempo of work and styles of communication, to name but a few.

My findings seem to evidence that Portuguese EFL teachers still convey a simplistic rather fragmented view of culture at the tourist information level. Thus, not promoting and supporting intercultural awareness for the multiple facets which make up culture. As I see it, this may even further reinforce existing stereotypes. Although the majority of Portuguese teachers acknowledge the importance of

integrating intercultural awareness[53] into the EFL curriculum, what they seem to be doing is feeding their students with preformed cultural information. In a similar fashion, Leão's small-scale study (2018) at a school cluster with Portuguese EFL teachers on their perceptions and beliefs about ICC equates both my findings and my concerns: "teachers do in fact recognise the importance of intercultural communicative competence and are willing to take action in their classroom although their teaching practice is not aligned with the requirements of the foreign language and ICC teacher" (p. 122). Much earlier, Guilherme (2002) aimed to find out how Portuguese EFL teachers approached culture and how they understood cultural awareness. Despite the differences in scope, range, and nature of her study, which was based on Critical Theory, some of her conclusions make me wonder if we travelled a great length since then. At the time, this researcher already identified an openness to include cultural content, but the teachers' understanding of cultural awareness was ill-defined and manifested lack of theory. In addition, teachers did not reveal an awareness of the complexities of intercultural communication (pp. 202-204). I would say that, notwithstanding the push given to interculturality by the targets and following documents (targets' support notebook and subject's core curriculum), Portuguese EFL teachers continue to be at a standoff, still to be resolved, between their beliefs and their pedagogic practices in the classroom. Perhaps, the first step towards raising intercultural awareness amongst students is to start with the teachers' necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to do so. The following EFL teacher profile (table 13), adapted from Sercu (2006, pp. 57-58)[54], highlights some of the required subcompetencies to help meet the expectations of all the stakeholders involved:

[53] My survey, although limiting in range because it is the only source of data available to support my claims, and the discussion which ensued my talk hints a lack of knowledge of theory and terminology. In general, teachers show signs of not holding a clear idea of what raising intercultural awareness implies, frequently collocating it with big "C" culture. Such loose interpretation of concepts may strongly affect the students' development of intercultural awareness and, thus, their ability as speakers to successfully interact with people who do not share the same cultural and linguistic heritage.

[54] Although I refer to Sercu, I am at variance with this scholar's suggestion that "teachers should be sufficiently familiar with the foreign cultures associated with the foreign language they teach" and "the contacts they have with these cultures should be both varied and frequent" (2006, p. 57) because it is much in tune with a FLT perspective, thus, reinforcing the native culture and failing to grasp the use of the language as a *lingua franca* that enables the learner-user to interact with all cultures, whatever they may be.

Knowledge	• Teachers should know: I. their own culture well and possess culture-general knowledge that can help them explain similarities and differences between cultures to learners; II. both what stereotypes pupils have and how to address these in the foreign language classroom; III. how to select appropriate content, learning tasks and materials that can help learners become interculturally competent.
Skills	• Teachers should be able to: I. employ teaching techniques that promote the acquisition of the five *savoirs*; II. help pupils relate their own culture to foreign cultures; III. compare cultures and to emphasise with foreign cultures' points of view; IV. select appropriate teaching materials and to adjust these materials if they do not allow achieving the aims of intercultural competence teaching; V. use experiential approaches to language-and-culture teaching.
Attitudes	• Teachers should be favourably disposed towards the integration of intercultural competence teaching in foreign language education and willing to actually work towards achieving that goal; • Teachers should define the objectives of foreign language education in terms of both language learning and intercultural competence acquisition.

Table 13 – EFL Teacher Profile for the Twenty-first Century

Stating how these attitudes, skills and knowledge translate into actual activities in the classroom is no trivial matter, especially if we think that classrooms have often been criticised (myself included) for their tokenistic input of interculturality. Yet in an attempt to help other teachers face the challenge of promoting and supporting intercultural awareness in the classroom a couple of examples can be put forward. Indeed, the Languages and Cultures in Europe (LACE) report (2007) commissioned by the EU, which analysed FL curricula in twelve European countries (Portugal not included) to identify the focus given to intercultural competence, reveals that the number one form of desired support by most teachers (79,7%) to develop intercultural competence in the classroom is "Examples of activities to do in the classroom" (p. 47).

Like Schulz (2007), I too think "that a comparative approach is the most beneficial in gaining cross-cultural understanding" (p. 16), i.e., to raise intercultural awareness. The suggestions that follow are based on this conviction:

Cultural (web) quest

Students gather information (on the web or in magazines, newspapers, books, brochures, etc.) about different target communities, not just English-speaking ones, according to the categories defined by the teacher. Depending on the needs/content timeline[55], these may include geography, weather, religion, important historical events, clothing, food and drink, greetings and manners, sports, education system and stereotypes. After collecting the necessary information, students have to make a report comparing and highlighting the similarities/differences between the different "worlds". The similarities/differences found are discussed in class for a better understanding on how people from distinct backgrounds behave the way they do. As a follow-up activity, I usually ask the students to make a poster with the similarities/differences they consider more relevant for each category.

Festivities (Halloween)

Students are asked to think of Portuguese traditions around this time of the year (e.g., Dia de Todos-os-Santos, Pão por Deus) and to match them with other traditions (e.g., English Jack-o'-Lantern, Trick or Treat! and Mexican Día de los Muertos). After brainstorming in small groups, students have to compare and highlight the similarities/differences between the activities related to each event. Finally, and reflect on how culture influenced people's attitudes.

These ideas are just a narrow sample of what can be done to effectively activate intercultural awareness in the classroom. Fellow teachers may use them as they stand or adapt them to fit a particular group of students according to grade, age

[55] This approach would help teachers with their time management. Turning back to the national online survey I conducted, the main difficulty to raise intercultural awareness mentioned by most teachers (110) is lack of time. Lack of time inside the classroom to comply with the predominantly linguistic-oriented syllabus and lack of time outside the classroom to plan activities, find and/or develop materials and reflect on the expected outcomes. "The demands on teachers are often such that they will not devote what is seen to be extra energy to a cultural dimension […]" (Byram, 2014, p. 221). The repercussions are twofold: a) the intercultural domain tends to be ignored and b) teachers fail to grasp that culture is always embedded in language, one way or another. Borrowing Kramsch's words, it is always in the background since day one.

span, overall ability, interests and intended outcomes (e.g., preparing for a field trip). Either one allows the teacher to explore intercultural awareness throughout the school year in a cumulative ongoing process, starting by the tip of the iceberg and then plunging into the far-reaching depths of little "c" culture, especially values and beliefs. In fact, the *cultural (web) quest* can easily lend itself to be the foundation for further activities by using the information researched – *Portuguese breakfast* (to raise awareness on what Portuguese people eat and how does it relate to other eating habits), *Holidays* (to raise awareness on how and why Portuguese people celebrate specific holidays and discussing if they match different cultures, or '*Oops-a-daisy'* (to raise awareness on culture-specific connotations Portuguese phrases and/or idiomatic formulations while discussing their importance in different foreign languages), to name a few. Considering the Portuguese schooling context, the focus of the examples offered may have as starting point the intercultural interaction between Portugal and the United Kingdom. Notwithstanding, the rationale presented here may and should also apply to a broader cross-cultural intersection with other countries, either English-speaking ones or otherwise to reflect the cultural milieus learners are most likely to come across. NNS-NNS interactions in intra and/or international scenarios will inevitably increase, as cultural borders are becoming less and less defined. "Although joining a new speech community was the objective of traditional language learning, now we have to train students to shuttle between communities […] (Canagarajah, 2005).

A brief comment must go to the assessment of learners' achievements. Even though the CEFR states the importance of intercultural awareness, valid descriptors to assess learners' ability are not provided. But this gap between theory and practice has been recently bridged by the CEFR-CV (Council of Europe, 2018), which added descriptor scales for this dimension under the heading "Building on Pluricultural Repertoire" (p. 159) hand-in-hand with the plurilingual dimension under the heading "Building on Plurilingual Repertoire" (p. 162). However, bearing in mind that on the one hand "assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of information […] undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development" (Banta & Palomba, 1999, p. 4) and on the other most assessment of intercultural awareness will be mainly formative, a portfolio may be a useful support throughout this process. The collection of a variety of interculturality

samples over time will allow the teacher to have an overall understanding about the students' intercultural awareness from multiple sources of evidence. Thus, I would recommend the usage of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) for Portugal (Ministry of Education and Science, 2001) accompanied with the Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters (Council of Europe, 2009), whenever appropriate. Adapted to fit the teacher's specific objectives and the student's needs the ELP and the Autobiography can function as a tool for learner autonomy, self-assessment, active involvement, systematic reflection and development of intercultural awareness. In order to harmonise formative and summative assessment, I would say it is, then, "possible [and advisable] to undertake formative assessment of teaching/learning processes as they develop and summative assessment of their results" (Council of Europe, 2016, p. 24). These two forms of assessment must be seen as two complementary poles, not opposite ones, as both contribute to national and international educational goals of global citizenship.

Understanding the culture that shaped and informed the language we strive to speak develops our ability to cope with ambiguity and interact appropriately with others, but the reverse is also true, as language and culture are and always have been intimately linked. What I mean is that the ability to communicate, i.e., to have language proficiency, in the TL helps to develop the feeling of being a global citizen and transforms how one interprets the world. From my point of view, intercultural awareness per se allows the speaker/learner to interact appropriately in a variety of cultures but may fall short when it comes to interact successfully, let alone act as a mediator. Even if the speaker/learner has developed a satisfactory level of intercultural awareness, the lack of language proficiency will necessarily limit his/her prowess to grapple with the complexities of intercultural communication. In this regard, Baker (2009) offers a definition of intercultural awareness that encapsulates my standpoint, considering it "a conscious understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices and frames of reference can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and context specific manner in real time communication" (p. 88). This is why in my language proficiency construct I include intercultural awareness[56] as one of three

[56] Taking into account that intercultural awareness is a collection of knowledge, skills and attitudes, it is here thought of as a competence.

intertwined dimensions, along with a linguistic and a strategic one, that together make up the speaker/learner's competence, which in turn cannot be set apart from proficiency and performance. Although recognizing the added value of Byram and Zarate's (1996) coined intercultural speaker term, I reiterate my move to the intelligible speaker term. In my perspective, it is not possible to establish the relationships, manage the dysfunctions and act as the mediator Byram speaks of (1997, p. 38) without being both proficient and intelligible, otherwise all these expected behaviours run the risk of falling by the wayside.

Raising awareness of differences and similarities between oneself and the other is vital for effective and appropriate behaviour in interactions with people from culturally diverse backgrounds. I restate that intercultural awareness is not a spontaneously occurring phenomenon and the EFL classroom is the most likely place where it can be developed. I am conscious that we, as language teachers, have many linguistic problems to attend to. However, I am also conscious of the corollary that development of intercultural awareness will have on our students' overall foreign language proficiency. Increased intercultural awareness may mean increased interest in further language learning. We must envision both learners and language learning holistically. Intercultural awareness may provide the foundation for EFL learners to become global citizens within a culturally diverse Europe/world.

II. 5 – The Nature of Speaking

Speaking has not always figured centrally in the field of applied linguistics. Even when it became particularly implicated in language teaching methodology, speaking was inaccurately seen as similar to writing. Thus, the overall nature of speaking was disregarded in favour of the long writing tradition of teaching and learning a foreign/second language. Failing to grasp that "speech is not spoken writing" (Bygate, 1987, p. 10), language was learnt through imitation, repetition, study of rules and translation. Perhaps, the actual teaching of speaking in most EFL environments like the Portuguese reflect this written-based orthodoxy. In Portugal for instance, more often than not scripted dialogues are used, which differ significantly from ordinary spoken language – functions and structures typically occur with unnatural frequency; utterances tend to be very short and overly well-

formed; backchannel responses, discourse markers and colloquial expressions are seldom used; and a shared knowledge of context is not assumed. These materials do not match the characteristics of spoken language, making learners sound bookish when they speak. Besides, speaking in such a manner makes it difficult to establish a rapport between speakers. Feeling friendly towards an interlocutor who speaks to you as if he/she was speaking to an audience is no easy task. Such type of spoken production is in line with lectures, talks at conferences, academic oral presentations, political speeches, and the like. Although resorting to speaking, these resemble the printed word. They involve long strings of utterances, a formal tone, planning in advance, careful thought on the topic, and even rehearsal. Everyday spoken language rarely generates these types of continuous correct complete sentences and clearly articulated words.

Researchers have recently started to dedicate to spoken language similar attention as to written language only to realise that they differ significantly from each other. Unlike writing, where a shared spatio-temporal ground is by definition non-existent, speaking is done in real-time narrowing greatly the possibility to plan, edit or revise one's discourse before processing and producing it. In addition, the speaker must master and mobilize an array of linguistic knowledge – vocabulary, sound system (segmental features), suprasegmental aspects like stress, intonation and rhythm and language functions – alongside with the kinesics usually related to spoken language to avoid extensive hesitation or communicational breakdowns. Unsurprisingly, speaking seems to be more challenging than writing, or reading for that matter. Often, EFL/ESL students struggle to speak but are quite effective writers and/or readers. Although I do not have verifiable data to support this claim, nor was it the intention of the study to assess the learners' written proficiency, it is grounded in my teaching experience as well as in the observations made during the period of my stay at the school I gained entry to (see chapter IV).

Speaking is broadly characterised by the use of incomplete sentences (known as ellipsis) to avoid unnecessary effort, connected or not with conjunctions, what Luoma (2004, p. 12) conceives of as idea units[57], short turns between interlocutors

[57] Roughly twenty years earlier, Chafe (1985) already discussed and identified the features of a prototypical idea unit: "it is spoken with a single coherent intonation contour […], it is preceded and

together with simple interrogative structures, manipulation of strategies to gain time to speak such as fillers and hesitation markers, repetitions and rephrasings (to correct, alter or improve what has been said by the speaker who is taking the floor or by previous speakers), fixed conventional phrases and use of informal speech (simpler syntax to make improvisation easier) due to its spontaneity and purposes. These devices are employed to both facilitate speaking and compensate for arising difficulties. Indeed, disfluencies and consequent repairs are quite natural in spoken language. Chafe (1985) amalgamates these differences into three categories – more vs. less lexical density, syntactic integration vs. syntactic fragmentation; and personal detachment vs. personal involvement. The first of each pair is associated to writing whilst the second is associated to speaking. Spoken language is commonly less lexically dense and fragmented, resulting in a high frequency of pro-forms, incomplete clauses and a low frequency of information-carrying words. The fact that speaking is traditionally an interactional activity contrasts with the detached stance of most writing. While the writer embarks in a solo endeavour, his/her audience is not present and often is not known, the speaker is directly involved with his/her listener(s), the subject matter and the context. This involvement is marked by the use of first-person pronouns, vocative forms and attention signalling.

In line with Chafe's three categories, Bieber, Conrad and Leech (2002) identify a variety, not the whole gamut (for instance interruptions are not mentioned), of social and situational features of conversation (see table 14). Although this list is not exclusive of speaking, i.e., some of the features highlighted may be found in writing too[58], it reflects their prominence in speech, whose nature is primarily interactional.

followed by some kind of hesitation[…], it is a clause – that is, it contains one verb phrase […], and it is about seven words long and takes about seven seconds to produce" (p. 106).
The internal structure of idea units usually encompasses two related structures, topicalisation and tails. The former emphasises the initial element of a clause to indicate the most important topic of the conversation, whilst the latter comes about at the end of the clause to focus attention on the comment with which the speaker started his/her turn.

[58] In a similar vein, some registers of spoken language (lectures, talks at conferences, academic oral presentations, political speeches) may also take on the attributes of written language. Here pronunciation, style, vocabulary choice and sentence structure are carefully thought of, impersonal and many times planned in advance. More often than not they also involve visual aids, in most cases PowerPoints.

Social and Situational Traits	Association with Conversational Traits
Typically occurs in a shared context	• High frequency of (personal) pronouns; • Low frequency of nouns; • Use of substitute pro-forms and ellipsis; • Reliance on deictic words; • Use of fragmentary components (frequently inserts).
Avoids elaboration and/or specification of meaning	• High frequency of verbs (especially primary and modal verbs); • Low frequency of elaborated noun phrases; • Use of complement clauses: that- and wh-; • Reliance on function words; • Considerable usage of vague language (often hedges).
Is marked by interaction	• Abundance of negative utterances; • Large quantity of question-answer sequences. Responses are often elicited via question-tags; • Profusion of attention-signalling forms; • Common use of vocatives; • Frequent use of discourse markers.
Expresses stance	• Heavy reliance on endearments (e.g., dear), interjections (e.g., wow), exclamations (e.g., good for you!), evaluative predicative adjectives (e.g., nice) and stance adverbials (e.g., fortunately).
Takes place in real time	• Occurrence of disfluencies; • Use of reduced forms (e.g., "gonna"), contractions and elision processes; • Usage of a restricted and repetitive repertoire.
Employs vernacular phraseology	• Style is eminently colloquial; • Occurrence of regional dialect forms.

Table 14 – Circumstances and Features of Spoken Language

The set of features presented thus far are intrinsic to the time-bound nature of speaking's processing conditions. The shape and nature of speaking is intimately connected to its socio-psychological processes, which clearly impact on language use and are responsible for most of the differences between spoken and written

language. Writers do not have to accord with the pressure of ever ticking time, nor do they readers. Although conceived to characterise L1 processes of speaking, one of the most influential models of spoken language processing is that of Levelt (1989) (1999). In fact, the model has proven itself a useful tool to discuss L2 spoken language processing as well. Perhaps what is missing, from an L2 perspective, is the effect of L1 knowledge in L2 output, but that was never Levelt's intention. The model comprises four phases of spoken language processing: conceptualization, formulation, articulation and self-perception/monitoring. The conceptual preparation phase focuses on the content of the message to be expressed. This lexical conceptualization is captured in Levelt's model by the term "preverbal message" (1999, p. 88). The second phase is concerned with the linguistic formulation of the message. Appropriate formulation is attained by activating three types of encoding: grammatical encoding – selecting the right words; morpho-phonological encoding – generating the words' syllabification in their syntactic context; and phonetic encoding – triggering the necessary articulatory gestures. The third phase involves the articulation of the message. The execution of the speaker's planning comes to life at this stage in the form of overt speech. Within the scope of the present thesis, this is the phase of L2 spoken language processing that most pertains to intelligibility. If the stream of sounds produced by the speaker is severely mispronounced, i.e., is unintelligible, the message does not get through, no matter whether it is well conceptualized and properly formulated. Thus, I restate that developing the ability to express oneself in a foreign language intelligibly is perhaps the most complex and difficult endeavour for students and teachers alike. Overall, these three phases of spoken language processing may showcase some differences between L1 and L2 speakers depending on two sets of conditions (so far particularly discussed in section 2.1) that are the heart of my study: (oral) proficiency and intelligibility. As alluded above the latter is related to articulation, whilst the former is related to conceptualization and formulation. The more proficient and intelligible an L2 speaker is, the less likely he will mispronounce, the faster he will process and the easier he will select and sequence the necessary elements for his message. The final phase of the model is grounded in the continuous effort made by the speaker to monitor what he/she produces. The goal is to check if the message gets across to the interlocutor and matches the speaker's intentions. Taken together, Levelt's

processing components "provide an account of speaking which has the virtue of integrating the processing of pragmatics, lexico-semantics, morpho-syntax, phonology and phonetics within a complex multi-level capacity" (Bygate, 2009, p. 407).

The value of Levelt's model is unquestionable, yet, more recently, Bygate (2009) recast it, offering a more comprehensive schema (figure 13). I find it better designed than that of Levelt because it takes into account not only the speaker but also the listener. Levelt did not pay much attention to the interpersonal nature of speaking.

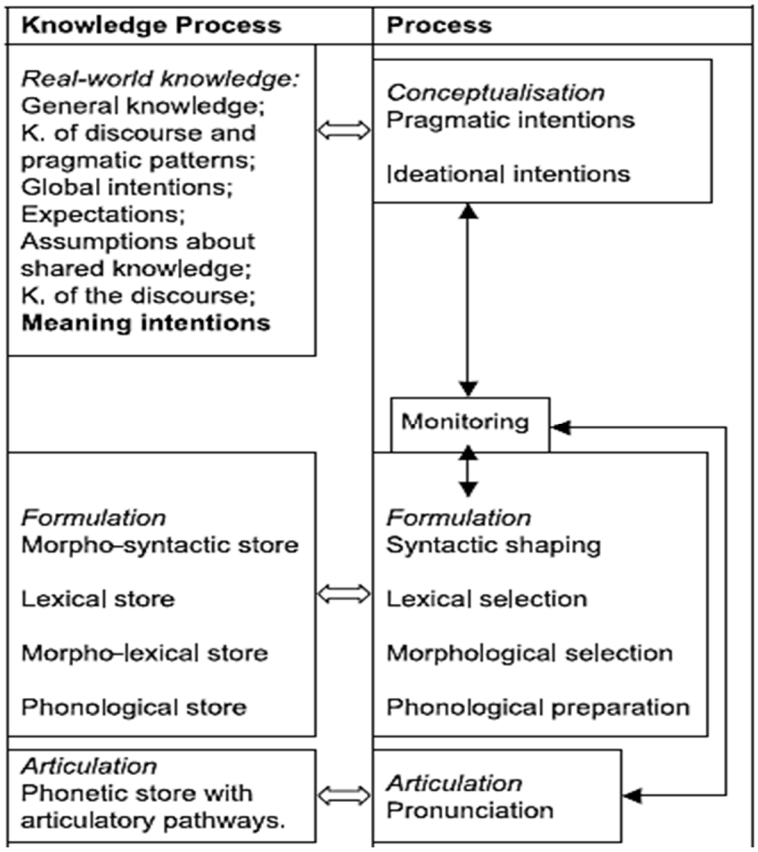

Figure 13 – Bygate's Blueprint of Spoken Language Processing

Bygate schema draws on Levelt inasmuch as the four language processes are concerned: conceptualization, formulation, articulation and self-perception/monitoring, but also adds two other key points. First, each of the processes falls back on stored knowledge, and second, the overall importance of speech purpose is emphasised. I am particularly enthusiastic about Bygate's blueprint of spoken language processing in view of the fact that it intersects with my

suggested framework of language proficiency. Besides what I have already discussed about the connection of proficiency and intelligibility with conceptualization, formulation and articulation, additional linkages can be identified. For instance, the stored knowledge that Bygate speaks of is closely connected to my view of competence, itself a form of stored linguistic, strategic and intercultural knowledge. Another association can be made between the monitoring process and performance. The latter is dependent on the former to correct and/or repair any sorts of speech errors, especially those which may have negative communicative consequences. In essence, I would say that Bygate's schema may be the perfect companion for my framework and that together they may serve the purpose of contributing for a better understanding of oral L2 pedagogy, both in Portugal and abroad.

Bearing in mind that "conversation is co-constructed reciprocally and contingently: that is to say, speakers respond to, build upon and refer to the previous utterances of other speakers" (Thornbury & Slade, 2006, p. 15) two other aspects of the nature of speaking are worth mentioning – reciprocity and negotiation of meaning. Reciprocity refers to the bond between speaker and listener and respective role switch during their interaction. Reciprocal exchanges require vocabulary, message, and phonological adjustments to take the listener into account, just as much it requires reaction from the listener to engage in the speaker's message, whether agreeing or disagreeing, understanding or misunderstanding. Negotiation of meaning closely follows reciprocity insofar as clear understanding is concerned. To try to avoid overt or implicit mistaken interpretations of what has been said speaker and listener rephrase, ask for clarification and confirm what they think the message was. To safeguard mutual intelligibility, finer explicitness may also be expressed. In this sense, each partaker is simultaneously speaker and listener with shared responsibilities on both the interaction´s success and outcomes. My assertions echo Grice's (1975) distant, but still valid, cooperative principle and its four conversational maxims: a) quantity – provide just the information required; b) quality – speak truthfully; c) relation – be relevant; and d) manner – avoid ambiguity, be brief and orderly.

This view of speaking as two-way process between speaker(s) and listener(s) in a real-time shared context is considered top-down. It is based on interactional skills whereby communication hinges upon the cooperation between interlocutors. Thinking of the classroom, this means that instead of helping students with small components of language (usually grammar-like ones) and well-formed sentences (the scripted dialogues alluded above) teachers should encourage them to take part in spoken discourse right from the beginning, but in a rather distinct way. For instance, helping them with lexical bundles and/or chunks, which they learn as wholes and use over and over again, just as they do with their L1. This is particularly important in short turns, which make up the lion's share of most spoken language interaction in real-life as they should inside the classroom as well. In fact, like Brown and Yule (1983), I too think that

> If native speakers typically produce short, phrase-sized chunks, it seems perverse to demand that foreign learners should be expected to produce complete sentences. Indeed it may demand of them, in the foreign language, a capacity for forward-planning and storage which they rarely manifest in speaking their own native language (p. 26).

Realising that more than thirty years have passed and still much, if not all, of these words hold true is bewildering. Thus, I would go further to wonder how teachers can expect students to express themselves confidently and fluently under the pressure of time if their daily classroom life relies heavily in writing, grammar, accuracy and bookish-like speaking events? In the spirit of accuracy and correctness, the opposite view of speaking is considered bottom-up. This view overlooks the interactive social nature of speaking by focusing on the speaker, not all the interactants, to see if he/she correctly articulates orderly sounds and language structures capable of triggering appropriate responses in the listener or not. In compliance with this view, teachers should start by helping students with the smallest units of spoken language – the sounds of individual phonemes and move their way up from there (words to sentences to genuine discourse). The heart of Audiolingualism's pedagogy is reflected in this view of teaching/learning the spoken language. It seems to me that any learner will transfer little, if any, knowledge from his/her bottom-up learning to real-life language-use situations. Speaking is not a

matter of plain articulation of sound, consonants, and vowels. As Kachru and Nelson (1996) point out, "language usage by a group or by an individual is not innate — rather, it is brought about and formed over time by its very use" (p. 90). Learners can only improve their spoken language proficiency if they have the opportunity to engage in speaking. Extensive speaking moments should be an integral part of the L2 teaching/learning process if a successful transition from the classroom to the real world is to be achieved.

Another point to be made about the nature of speaking regards purpose. Oral interaction is used for two major reasons, conveying information (transactional nature of speaking) and socializing[59] (interpersonal nature of speaking). When applying the first a bigger degree of clarity is needed since the main point is to make the message clear to the listener and confirming he/she has understood it accurately. The speaker communicates to get something done; whose accomplishment depends on the success of the speech interaction. Thus, when the speaker's purpose is transactional speech tends to be clearer and vocabulary more specific. Everyday L2 classroom activities involve this type of message-oriented interaction – a pupil asking permission to go to the toilet or the teacher explaining a grammar content. Metaphorically, rather than a transaction of goods and/or services, in teaching-learning situations there is a transaction of information, usually in the form of facts held by the teacher to be passed on to the learner, who in turn is expected to acquire them. In Portugal, the confirmation of success (or not) is typically displayed later on in formal assessment occasions. Not so common within the classroom, chatting is pervasive in almost any daily activity we may engage in. A large part of our social life is made through symmetrically short conversational turns with other speakers. Such type of interaction "often reveals quite large areas of unclarity and non-specificity where it seems likely that the listener was only partially processing the message coming in, […] which we could characterise as listening for the gist, the overall impression, rather than for the detail" (Brown and Yule 12). Accordingly, topics are not intensely discussed, information is sparse and differences in opinion are easily smoothed over. Creating a positive atmosphere between interactants is the main goal of chatting. It seems,

[59] Within this context socializing and chatting can be used interchangeably.

then, that classroom talk overrides the interpersonal nature of speaking, favouring its transactional nature. As indicated above, the main goal is conveyance of knowledge from teachers to learners, leading to what I perceive as another pitfall to the development of the learners' spoken language proficiency – asymmetry between speakers. Teachers still control most of the speaking taking place in the classroom, which translates in restricted opportunities for learners to participate and explore their own knowledge of the language. The teacher asks almost all the questions (traditionally display questions), initiates the topics, nominates the respondents, if necessary, initiates repair and provides feedback. In this vein, most spoken language exchanges in the classroom take the Initiation-Response-Follow-up (IRF) format. The teacher starts the exchange, the student answers, the teacher closes the exchange. Students do not have the opportunity to ask questions, turn-take, agree/disagree, self-repair, manage topics, and so on. Van Lier (2001) compares this format to a "discursive guided bus tour" by which "students' opportunities to exercise initiative […] or to develop a sense of control and self-regulation (a sense of ownership of the discourse, a sense of being empowered) are extremely restricted" (p. 96). He goes further to assert that a "prolonged use of the IRF format may have a negative effect on intrinsic motivation and cause a decrease in levels of attention and involvement" (p. 97). Additionally, related research (Rose & Kasper, 2001) suggests that teacher-fronted instruction also restricts opportunities for the acquisition of TL pragmatics. Such kind of exchange is unmistakably the prototype of most L2 classroom talk in Portugal. Thus, I would say that speaking rights in the L2 classroom should be reappraised and so should the balance between transactional and interpersonal purposes. As a teacher myself, I acknowledge the fact that classroom talk serves a pedagogical purpose, but it must be widened to embrace a variety of spoken genres; otherwise, we will continue to be trapped to a narrow interpretation of ELT (cf. Seedhouse, 1996) based on elicitation routines whose main goal is to teach and assess grammar and vocabulary. As it happens, especially in EFL contexts like the Portuguese, I wonder where and how the students will be exposed, practice and develop their speaking ability for conversational interaction if not in the classroom with the help and instruction of their teachers. Once more I restate the need to go beyond grammar, explicit or implicit, or we run

the risk of failing to prepare our students for the different sorts of interactions they will encounter outside the classroom.

It must be stressed that both sorts of talk are not mutually exclusive, despite the differences highlighted here. In fact, many speech events encompass one another – more often message-oriented interaction is embedded in socializing – and the two require the ability to use language communicatively. Hardly, if ever, do we speak in a purely interpersonal or purely transactional manner. Although it may be said that speaking is primarily interpersonal, it also extends well under the scope of the transactional function. Kingen (2000) goes further to intertwine these two major purposes that speaking serves into a broad-ranging list of twelve language functions:

1. **Personal** - expressing personal feelings, opinions, views, concerns, beliefs and ideas;
2. **Descriptive** - describing someone or something, real or imagined, […] present or past;
3. **Narrative** - creating and telling stories or chronologically sequenced events;
4. **Instructive** - giving instructions or providing directions designed to produce an outcome;
5. **Questioning** - asking questions in order to obtain information;
6. **Comparative** - comparing two or more objects, people, ideas, or opinions in order to make judgments about them;
7. **Imaginative** – […] expressing mental images of people, places, events, and objects;
8. **Predictive** - predicting the possible future;
9. **Interpretative** - exploring meanings, creating hypothetical deductions, and considering inferences;
10. **Persuasive** - changing others' opinions, attitudes, or points of view, or influencing the behaviour of others in some way;
11. **Explanatory** - explaining, clarifying, and supporting ideas and opinions;
12. **Informative** - sharing information with others (pp. 218-219).

Spoken language ever-present nature is at the core of social relations and maintenance of transactional and interpersonal ties regardless of age, social status, gender and cultural or ethnical background. Yet, considering the cohort to be studied (9th grade students), age deserves a comment in its own right. The language used by young speakers has some distinctive features, when compared to adult speakers, that need to be taken into account by their teachers. For instance, youngsters tend to be more informal than adults, which translates into using less modality while producing the language. It is uncommon for adolescents to use could or might. They are much more likely to use their present corresponding forms can and may, especially can. Complex modalized sentences do not seem to fit this specific group of speakers. The point I am trying to make, as I did earlier when discussing the top-down approach to speaking, is the necessity to rethink if it is fair or even realistic to demand of our adolescent students' styles of speaking that do not conform to their age span and they do not use in their L1, nor will we ever hear them from the mouths of their NS counterparts.

II. 5.1 – Assessing Speaking Proficiency

Along with the rise of CLT, the importance of oral skills in language syllabuses and curriculums grew and led to increasing research in this area, with the focus largely on the need to measure ability and the best way to do it[60]. Hence, considerable attention has been drawn both to assessment and the context in which it operates. However, assessment has become a popular but "sometimes misunderstood term in current educational practice" (Brown H. D., 2004, p. 4) and for this reason a distinction between the terms assessment and testing, which are repeatedly used interchangeably, must be made. Given its broaden nature, evaluation is consciously not addressed here. Very briefly, it "refers to a process of systematically collecting information in order to make a judgement. Evaluation can

[60] Associated with the rise of CLT is the early work on "testing" by Arthur Hughes (*Testing for Language Teachers*) and Cyril Weir (*Understanding and Developing Language Tests*). Both authors shed light on the principles of testing, the qualities that every test must have and how all the four skills can be tested by providing practical guidance to help EFL teachers design better tests. Yet, although recognizing the added value of Hughes and Weir's work, I would say that from a classroom perspective tests alone may fall short of accurately capturing the learners' (spoken) ability.

thus concern a whole range of issues in and beyond language education: lessons, courses, programs, and skills can all be evaluated" (Cameron, 2001, p. 222).

Testing is an administrative product-oriented procedure, usually imposed by the teacher, that occurs at specific moments with the purpose of measuring second/foreign language knowledge for scoring and grading. Tests are often a norm-referenced instrument – scores are compared amongst students, used to determine individual ability or demonstrate mastery of a given skill, and offer limited information to identify areas for improvement because they tend to be "one-off" events of speaking proficiency. When a teacher gives a test, he/she is obtaining a narrow sample of the test-taker's performance in a specific domain that does not account for the progress made (or not) based on that performance. On the other hand, assessment is an ongoing process-oriented approach that takes many different forms. One of these forms are tests. Thus, testing is a subset of assessment and should be seen as one of the many methods available to assess students' verbal performance. In view of the limited nature of tests, alternative assessment procedures such as self-assessment, peer-assessment, portfolios, performance assessment, observation, etc., have been advocated by some experts like Shohamy (1997) and Bachman (2002). I prefer to consider these methods, tests included, as simply assessment, preferably when used in an integrated fashion to help improve learners' speaking skills. Assessment is often a criterion-referenced measurement – students' performance being compared against a set of criteria, used in educational contexts to monitor students' strengths and weaknesses. It is operated in a systematic way for the purpose of helping "teachers find out what students are learning in the classroom and how well they are learning it" (Angelo & Cross, 1993, p. 4). Assessments serve as tools to draw inferences that the teachers can rely on about the students' achievements, and to make the necessary adjustments in the teaching-learning environment, i.e., using assessment results to change practices which in turn assist students to improve their speaking proficiency. In a nutshell, "assessment is the systematic collection, review, and use of information […] undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development" (Banta & Palomba, 1999, p. 4), entailing careful planning, implementing, and acting upon the results. Assessment goes beyond the question how much the students have

learned; instead, it asks how they learned and what can be done to improve their learning.

Speaking has unique traits that make it the most distinctive and probably the most difficult skill to assess. Thus, the teacher/assessor has to judge, in real-time, production and/or interaction related to several aspects of what is being said (range, accuracy, fluency, interaction, coherence[61]). Furthermore, in Portugal the assessment of speaking proficiency faces a double challenge – the dominance of summative assessment over formative assessment and the reluctance of Portuguese teachers to address it. Most students studying English at the lower levels (5th up to 9th graders) are overloaded with grammar instruction and exercises, usually done via course-books, quizzes or worksheets. Clearly, the emphasis given to linguistic competence outweighs that given to linguistic performance, which in turn hinders the students' speaking proficiency and the assessment process itself. The context in which EFL is delivered in Portuguese classrooms is broadly homogenous – the teachers are non-native speakers; the students share and speak the same first language and English is not used continuously outside the classroom. Yet learners and teachers themselves differ in their reactions to the learning process. As regards the first group, some lack motivation whilst others welcome the opportunity to further develop their speaking ability. As for the second group, some perceive the assessment of speaking proficiency as a lofty goal whereas others organize diversified speaking assessments that are stimulating.

In Portugal, assessment starts right at the beginning of the school year. The diagnostic assessment is a common practice usually done via testing. Worldwide it is classically applied at the beginning of language courses. Theoretically, it aims to ascertain the learner's strengths and weaknesses, although it is the latter that is acted upon by teachers. All their efforts seem to be directed at what the students cannot do. The root of the problem may lie in the confused nature of diagnostic testing in past and recent literature. Very often diagnostic and placement tests are taken as transposable terms serving the same purposes, when in fact they are not.

[61] These are the qualitative aspects of spoken language use described in the *Common European Framework of Reference* (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 29). More recently (Council of Europe, 2018), these aspects have been expanded to include phonology (pp. 171-172). For a thorough discussion on the new phonological dimension of the CEFR – CV see section II. 5.4.

Brown implies they can be indistinguishable and a placement test can serve the same aim as a diagnostic test (2004, pp. 46, 47). As mentioned above, the latter is supposed to identify strong points and weaknesses, whereas the former is meant to help teachers place their students in a certain proficiency level appropriate to his/her abilities. Alderson (2007) notes how neglected diagnostic testing is in language testing research: "[…] there is virtually no description, much less discussion, of what the underlying constructs might be that should be operationalized in valid diagnostic tests" (p. 28). In addition to being limited, the information about diagnostic assessment is also rather unclear, leading to multiple interpretations and misconceptions. In the light of such lack of rationale, Blood (2011) suggests that "in the broadest sense, then, diagnostic second language (L2) assessment refers to any L2 assessment practice, whether in the form of a formal written test or informal teacher questioning, that yields diagnostic feedback" (p. 57).

All things considered; I strongly believe there is a problem in Portugal concerning speaking proficiency diagnostic assessment. Each year students must do a diagnostic assessment (done via testing) related to their former learning. Yet such an assessment neither does what it is meant to do – identifying strengths and weaknesses – nor is it designed as a diagnostic assessment. Firstly, it hardly ever covers all the major skills, as speaking is usually omitted and secondly, it resembles an achievement test[62] instead of a diagnostic one. As a result, students are not assessed to check what they can or cannot yet do, but instead are assessed on their understanding of language features from previous years with little or no valid feedback available for students or teachers. The effectiveness of diagnostic assessment is undermined and does not contribute as it should to successful learning. I would say that in Portugal and elsewhere there is a clear need to put diagnostic assessment on the language teaching research agenda. Several key aspects such as the functions and constructs that should underlie it remain obscure. If we believe that prior knowledge shapes new learning, we need to redefine our conceptualization of diagnostic assessment.

[62] As the name suggests, achievement tests aim at knowing how successful students are in achieving objectives. That is, if they acquired what they have been taught. They are usually subdivided into two categories: final achievement tests (done at the end of the semester/year to measure overall achievement) and progress achievement tests (done during the course of study to measure students' progress with relation to the objectives established).

Formative assessment is perhaps the oldest form of assessment, given its close connection to everyday work in the classroom. In an ideal situation, this type of assessment would pick up where diagnostic assessment finishes. Through a range of tasks designed to provide further learning opportunities, students' strong points would be reinforced, and their weaknesses would be improved. Nonetheless, this is not exactly what happens in many EFL classrooms around the world because of the importance given to summative assessment (Boud, 1995). Formative assessment, when done via testing, often tends not to do what it purports, but instead mimics high or low stakes testing exercises. In their comprehensive study on formative assessment, Black and Wiliam draw attention to the key weaknesses of current practices:

> Classroom evaluation practices generally encourage superficial and rote learning, concentrating on recall of isolated details, usually items of knowledge which pupils soon forget. Teachers do not generally review the assessment questions that they use and do not discuss them critically with peers, so there is little reflection on what is being assessed. The grading function is over-emphasised and the learning function under-emphasised. There is a tendency to use a normative rather than a criterion approach, which emphasises competition between pupils rather than personal improvement of each. The evidence is that with such practices the effect of feedback is to teach the weaker pupils that they lack ability, so that they are de-motivated and lose confidence in their own capacity to learn (1998, p. 16).

Formative assessment should influence teaching and learning alike in order to provide valid, continuous feedback to bridge the gap between the teacher's proposed goals and the student's present state of mastery. Different examples of language should be elicited over time and the information collected used to modify teaching strategies to help students improve. Ongoing assessment committed to enhancing students' abilities should be frequent so that the trajectory of learning can be traced. EFL (Portuguese) teachers need to be particularly adroit at organising class speaking activities that favour the learning function rather than the grading function, which means valuing the use of formative assessment as a tool to aid the pupils' weaknesses and consequently enhance speaking proficiency.

Summative assessment, occasionally termed overall assessment, is a widely accepted practice, whose preferred instrument are tests. Summative assessment is directed either at yielding certification of achievement (High Stakes or Standardized testing), usually associated with employment and/or further study, or evaluation for achievement (Low Stakes or Classroom testing), usually associated with the level of attainment of specific items covered by the curriculum. Hence, a cursory look might lead us to distinguish a high-stakes assessment from a low-stakes assessment by its function and not its form. However, I believe the outcomes are similar. Despite differences in setting, neither meet present needs nor do they meet future learning needs, compromising students' spoken language proficiency. Over the years, summative assessment has become the most dominant type of assessment in school contexts. Not only Boud (1995), but other scholars (Black & Wiliam, 1998), concentrate on the negative effects of the dominance of summative assessment. Teachers undertake assessments which are a replica of High or Low Stakes testing. In addition, Portuguese summative assessments, like diagnostic assessments, usually omit speaking. Assessment is carried out not to support learning, but by grading tests that do not usually provide useful information feedback. There is "a widespread public expectation of assessment, and while it could be argued that this is insufficiently future-oriented, it would be difficult to mount a case which involved shifting existing well-established perceptions of this purpose" (Boud & Falchikov, 2006, p. 401). The perception of assessment as marking/grading runs deep amongst students as well, whose focus is driven by the desire for higher grades rather than learning. Thus, students' efforts are not volitional, but motivated by the demands of assessment. Input is simply memorized and not transformed into real operational knowledge, prior knowledge is not related to new knowledge, and concepts are simply applied mechanically without reflection. In Portugal, like in many other EFL contexts, summative assessment practices have prompted the devaluation of actual learning. Instead, although we need summative assessment to make decisions, students' results should contribute to forthcoming learning. Such assessment cannot be looked at in isolation, but as part of an overarching view on scholarship. Portuguese EFL teachers call for specific pointers as to how summative assessment, along with formative and diagnostic assessment, can be improved to close the gap between pedagogy and current assessment practices. The challenge for the teachers

here lies in raising awareness about the importance of addressing and integrating speaking within the assessment procedure and using it as a means to develop students' proficiency.

The key point when discussing assessment is making sure it reflects instruction and is meaningful for the learners. Used wisely, assessment can be the most substantial stimulant for learning. However, to do so, a paradigm shift must take place. If we genuinely want to integrate assessment with instruction, we need to reconceptualize several well-established beliefs. As shown above, our concerns have to move from testing to learning, and therefore to the individual; and grading outcomes ought to become subsidiary to learning outcomes.

From the beginning of the twenty-first century onwards, a new framework has steadily gained ground in the field of educational assessment, the learning-oriented assessment approach. This innovative view of pedagogy "holds that for all assessments, whether predominantly summative or formative in function, a key aim is for them to promote productive student learning" (Carless, 2009, p. 80). Hence, whatever form the assessment takes it must be a means of supporting learning and, simultaneously, to acknowledge its centrality. Implementing a learning-oriented assessment approach to speaking "involves the collection and interpretation of evidence about performance so that judgments can be made about further language development" (Purpura, 2004, p. 236) to promote knowledge. Analysing Purpura's words carefully, we conclude that evidence is the core ingredient of learning-oriented assessments. After being collected from multiple sources, evidence helps teachers to monitor students' progress, shows students' acquisition (or otherwise) of what is being taught, and provides meaningful feedback for students and teachers.

Carless (2009) summarizes learning-oriented assessment in three simple principles. Bearing these principles in mind, teachers will be able to engage learners in productive assessment activities. "Principle 1: Assessment tasks should be designed to stimulate productive learning practices amongst students; Principle 2: Assessment should involve students actively in engaging with criteria, quality, their own and/or peers' performance [*sic*]; Principle 3: Feedback should be timely and forward-looking so as to support current and future student learning" (p. 83).

Learning-oriented assessment elements are also set forth by Carless (2007, p. 60) in schematic form:

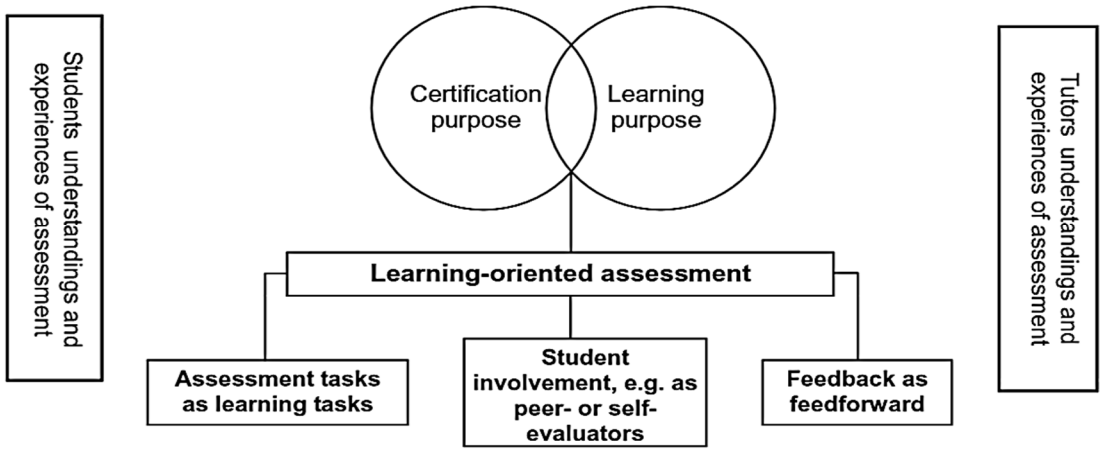

Figure 14 – Framework for Learning-Oriented Assessment

Such a framework aligns curriculum, learning and assessment with the main stakeholders. It must be interpreted as a whole and not just as a sum of the parts, a well-oiled machine whose cogs work in unison towards the same outcome – successful learning. At the centre, we have the purposes of assessment, which are envisioned as overlapping. Learning and certification interconnect with each other enhancing the learning features of assessment. To achieve their intended purposes, appropriate tasks should be designed, students have to be involved and feedback has to be significant. First, learning tasks should be conceptualized as assessment tasks and vice-versa, encompassing the anticipated learning goals by promoting interactional authenticity, a reflection of the real-world and collaborative work. Second, students must be given the opportunity to understand the criteria and standards applied to their work, enabling them to accurately judge whether they meet these criteria and standards or not. "The conceptual rationale for peer assessment and peer feedback is that it enables students to take an active role in the management of their own learning" (Liu & Carless, 2006, p. 280). Third, feedback must be timely, relevant, and able to be acted upon by the students, i.e., functions as feedforward. If it does not help students close the gap between their expected learning outcomes and the present state, it does not really qualify as feedback. This should make us wonder if it is actually feedback we have been providing our students with.

Learning-oriented approaches to speaking should not be concerned only with measuring ability, but also with actual learning of pronunciation (segmental and suprasegmental aspects), vocabulary, language functions, register, turn-taking and breakdowns compensation. Thus, teachers must make sure that learning/assessment tasks represent spontaneous, real-life spoken interaction and target the speaking aspects the students are supposed to use. As a teacher guided by a learning-oriented assessment approach, I want to grasp what my students know, understand and can use with relation to every speaking subset, and employ the data collected to develop their ability, and meet individual needs. Implementing a learning-oriented assessment approach to speaking proficiency means designing interesting and cognitively appealing tasks, which simultaneously foster enjoyment for learning. Besides "task design and operationalization, teachers also need to consider how assessment relates to and can help promote [speaking] acquisition" (Purpura, 2004, p. 236). In light of this reasoning, I believe that one of the major issues concerning speaking assessment in the current Portuguese EFL classroom is the lack of assessment literacy. By assessment literacy I mean not only having the knowledge of what assessment is and means, including its terminology; but also, having the knowledge of assessment methodologies and techniques, how to assess, how to analyse and interpret the results from the assessments, and how to apply this data to improve students' learning.

A final comment should go to what and how to assess. While it is (perhaps) utopian to think of a clear-cut formula for assessing speaking proficiency in any given class, some suggestions can be put forward. Every practitioner should have a clear idea of what and how to assess in the classroom. With regard to the former, bearing in mind the objective of increasing speaking proficiency, it is appropriate to consider my non-Linear (Language) Proficiency Framework. This means that the teacher may decide what to assess for speaking proficiency by considering three intertwined dimensions of competence, activated, retrieved and contrived by proficiency and then relayed to performance: linguistic dimension – grammar (includes syntax and morphology), vocabulary (includes semantics) and pronunciation, in particular intelligibility; strategic dimension – strategies used to overcome communication breakdowns (kinesics, circumlocution, speech rate, repetition and self-repair); and intercultural dimension – appropriateness of

language use (vocabulary, register, style, turn-taking, interaction conventions and politeness) in different contexts (pragmatics) with different people. In respect of the latter, it is difficult to answer unequivocally how to assess these dimensions; even amongst researchers the best way to assess students' speaking proficiency lacks consensus. I strongly advocate a holistic approach to assessment, i.e., using more than one method for assessing speaking proficiency. The collection of a variety of speech samples over time will allow the teacher to have an overall understanding about the students' linguistic performance – what he/she is or is not able to produce, yet. Classroom speaking assessments can take many forms[63], ranging from more simple/discrete ones like pattern drills to practise contextualised minimal pairs (for instance minimal pairs bingo), to more complex/integrative ones like social-interactive tasks (debates, role-plays and/or interviews) to practice a blend of the aforementioned dimensions of competence. In-between there are other tasks to measure the students' speaking proficiency. Some of the possibilities are:

- Pair and/or group tasks (e.g., doing an information gap exercise);
- Description/Comparison tasks (e.g., the student is given one or two different objects to describe and/or compare);
- Opinion-expressing tasks (e.g., presenting a meaningful up-to-date topic to the students, for instance technology, and elicit their opinion);
- Storytelling tasks (e.g., students tell stories from their childhood using visual input – Little Red Riding Hood);
- Game-based tasks (e.g., playing a guessing game).

Considering the twofold context of the classroom – the need for a systematic assessment of the learners' progress and frequency of spontaneous oral interactions amongst students – another measurement of speaking proficiency may be observation. By observation I do not mean the perceptions teachers have of students' aptitude from every question, answer, attitude, etc., occurring day in and day out. To establish observation as a valid and reliable classroom assessment technique requires record keeping, from simple anecdotal notes to score rubrics,

[63] For a practical example of a classroom speaking assessment cycle see Correia (2016, pp. 96-102).

criteria sheets, checklists, or even a mixture of all four. The key point is making sure that assessment should reflect instruction and be meaningful for the learners.

According to Cohen (1994), "typical classroom interactions involve teacher utterances and shorter learner responses" (1994, p. 279), which means that, regardless of the selected assessment method, (Portuguese) EFL teachers must rethink questionable practices and promote a paradigm shift in their classrooms. Effective speaking assessments hinge on extensive chunks of spoken language and on full responses from the learners, otherwise the process of assessing speaking proficiency in itself may come to a halt.

II. 5.2 – On Affection: Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

Language learning anxiety and its importance for language acquisition has been continuously studied over the last three decades. Like Daubney (2010), I too think that "this surge in research has partly resulted from the significant interest resulting from the often controversial claims that anxiety is a decisive factor in learners' success or otherwise in a foreign language" (p. 24). Unsurprisingly, foreign language anxiety, a form of anxiety experienced by learners in response to using the L2 presumed to be an inversely powerful factor for language learning achievement, and its potential source(s) within the classroom has interested both scholars and teachers (Horwitz, 2010). However, in Portugal, in terms of research, little or no significance has seemingly been given to the influence of anxiety on the learning process. The exception is the research undertaken by Daubney (2002) (2010) and Daubney and Sá (2008) (2012). This section aims at raising awareness of teachers in general and Portuguese teachers in particular of the influence that language anxiety might have within their classrooms, especially when it comes to speaking. I will narrow down my focus and give this skill due prominence, "since speaking in the target language seems to be the most threatening aspect of foreign language learning" and because "the current emphasis on the development of communicative competence poses particularly great difficulties for the anxious student" (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986, p. 132). Indeed, while it is beneficial to use language extensively as the medium of instruction and learning it is also true that the pressure of having to express and take risks in the TL is remarkably threatening. Learners'

potential speaking anxiety is always there to hinder their willingness to communicate. Considering the influence of emotional states over cognition it is worth quoting Damasio (1994) here:

> Feelings [...] because of their inextricable ties to the body, they come first in development and retain a primacy that subtly pervades our mental life. Because the brain is the body's captive audience, feelings are winners among equals. And since what comes first constitutes a frame of reference for what comes after, feelings have a say on how the rest of the brain and cognition go about their business. Their influence is immense (pp. 159-160).

It seems, then, that foreign language anxiety can be one of the most resonant issues concerning affective variables' interference with the cognitive domain.

It is commonplace to think about anxiety in learners in their late teens and early adulthood, comprising secondary levels or even higher education, due to developmental concerns and/or identity issues, which often translate into growing pains arising from how peers see them. Usually, younger language learners are deemed to be less inhibited and more concerned about pleasing the teacher than worried with their classmates' reactions to their participation in classroom activities. Given my own teaching experience (learners aged between 10 and 14), I am inclined to challenge this view and would like to suggest that future research could look into younger learners (pre- and early teens) from a different perspective. In truth, this cohort is growingly more and more worried about who they are and how others perceive them as socialisation, and with-it popularity, is the pinnacle of their existence. Concerns around the self- (self-esteem, self-worth, self-confidence, and self-efficacy) are as sensitive to lower-secondary students as to their older counterparts.

Over the years, I have come across many different students with divergent socioeconomic backgrounds and linguistic interests, which have a great influence on their global performance. Yet quite intriguing for me though, especially at the beginning of my career, was realising that most of my pupils shared a common trait – permanent distaste for speaking in front of the rest of the class. Despite their level of overall competence in the remaining skills, the usual sentence said, using the L1 was and has been "I can't speak English!" or even just a lowering of the head and no

answer at all. Such a perennial behavioural pattern triggered my interest in understanding the reason underlying this phenomenon; more so, given the pervasiveness of the problem and the adverse effect it has on the students' language acquisition ability. Though anxiety might influence speaking and overall language ability, it is important to encourage students to speak. Indeed, as Tsui (1996) has pointed out:

> Although one should avoid making the sweeping generalization that talking equals learning, and forcing students to participate when they are not ready, one cannot deny that participation is very important in language learning. When students produce the language that they are studying, they are testing out the hypotheses which they have formed about the language. When they respond to the teacher's or other students' questions, raise queries, and give comments, they are actively involved in the negotiation of comprehensible input and the formulation of comprehensible output, which are essential to language acquisition (p. 146).

It is also true that anxiety may be seen as a positive influence on students' performance, which has led to considerable debate amongst scholars and researchers alike. Scovel (1978), in his seminal paper on anxiety, discusses facilitating anxiety – one that motivates for the learning task at hand; and debilitating anxiety – one that affects short-term memory and encourages avoidance of the learning task. Bailey (1983) suggests that "in formal instructional settings, if […] anxiety motivates the learner to study the target language, it is facilitating. On the other hand, if it is severe enough to cause the learner to withdraw from the language classroom […] anxiety is debilitating" (p. 96). Although recognizing Bailey's rationale, I would advocate a slightly different view. Given the nature of speaking, namely the exposure it requires from the student, spoken production and/or interaction may often prompt a debilitating anxious state that exerts a negative influence on the classroom's dynamics in general and the learners' spoken performance in particular, which tends to decline swiftly. Anxiety adversely affects three of the four spoken language processes alluded to in section 5: conceptualization, formulation, and articulation. Concretely, speaking tends to activate what Cheng, Horwitz and Schallert (1999) address as language-skill-

specific anxiety, which has a bearing on low self-confidence and self-efficacy – the students' beliefs in their capabilities to achieve expected performance levels. If the students have a low self-perception of their own worth, they are likely to feel anxious and be unsuccessful.

In view of the rationale presented thus far, I would say that EFL teachers face a distinct, but common, problem in their classrooms – getting students to actively engage in spoken production and/or interaction. Single word answers like "Yes" or "No", avoidance of participation, a nod of the head or just an awkward smile seem to be common features of many EFL environments around the world. Even very capable learners in the remaining skills tend to side-step L2 communication situations. Like Tsui, I too think "that when students are unresponsive, it is possible that they are affected by language learning anxiety rather than simply being unmotivated or incompetent" (1996, p. 165). Speaking seems to be the skill that by far most exposes the students' sense of self. The fear of making mistakes in front of peers and being subjected to potential general mockery or laughter, and the frustration caused by the inability of expressing oneself clearly in the same way as using one's mother tongue, hinders learners' willingness to communicate and participate. Thus, as hinted above, language anxiety is deemed as "possibly the affective factor that most pervasively obstructs the learning process" (Arnold & Brown, 1999, p. 8). A decrease in self-confidence, self-efficacy and motivation, combined with high levels of anxiety, lead to a high "affective filter", an emotional barrier postulated by Krashen (1981) (2009), which students generate subconsciously when they feel vulnerable and which undermines the language acquisition process. When the affective filter is triggered, the learner becomes unreceptive to the language input presented. Even if he or she understands what has been said the barrier precludes input from reaching the part of the brain responsible for language acquisition. In pedagogical terms, besides comprehensible input, students need classrooms conducive to low affective filters. Affective variables play a significant role in increasing or reducing the learners' willingness to communicate and may transform them into more reticent L2 speakers.

Bearing in mind my professional interest in developing learners' oral proficiency, the question of how to tackle and lessen negative feelings towards this

specific skill naturally arise. The endeavour, then, is identifying the root of the problem as well as finding ways to cater to the students' needs. In the literature, some suggestions are put forward by researchers. For Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) "any performance in the L2 is likely to challenge an individual's self-concept as a competent communicator and lead to reticence, self-consciousness, fear, or even panic" (p. 128), which means that the source of the pupils' anxiety comes from their self-perception of ability. In a similar fashion, Young (1991) argues that "students who start out with a self-perceived low ability level in a foreign or second language are the likeliest candidates for language anxiety [...]" (p. 427). According to Kitano (2001), the "speaking skill is usually the first thing that learners compare with that of peers, teachers, and native speakers" (p. 550). By comparing their skills against other speakers, particularly more fluent speakers, low self-confident students will only aggravate their frustration and self-doubt. Often students end up in a state of complete vulnerability and communication apprehension. Informal conversations (using the L1) noted down after class for the past six years with students showing signs of distress, point out a correspondence with the line of reasoning presented by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, Young and Kitano. As a starter, after a brief explanation on what we were about to talk, I always asked students "Don't you like English?", followed by several other questions specifically anxiety-related like "Do you worry about making mistakes?". I realized that a vast majority of pupils is fond of learning English; nevertheless, I also perceived a deepen dread associated to speaking tasks. Invariably, the conversations finished with me reassuring the student. At first, I was looked at with distrustful eyes; however, when the students steadily understood I meant what I said – that I would be supportive, would not correct mistakes in front of the class and would not allow mockery – they began to show signs of improvement. Building a rapport with the students, not just on an academic level, may prove decisive for their language learning success.

Probing for signs of anxiety in the classroom is a significant matter for EFL teachers and consequently for their learners. To try to simplify a complex process, I would say you just have to know what the signs are. By identifying those indicators, the "trained eye" might be able to sort out which students may be experiencing anxiety symptoms. Common psycho-physiological symptoms associated with anxiety include "apprehension, worry, even dread. [Students] have difficulty

concentrating, become forgetful, sweat, and have palpitations. They exhibit avoidance behaviour such as missing class and postponing homework" (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986, p. 126). Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) developed a useful working measurement tool to identify anxious foreign language learners. To measure students' anxiety levels, the authors developed a 33-item, 5-point Likert-scale type questionnaire, named the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). To better understand my students, I have used it myself. Yet after one or two try-outs I realized the FLCAS does not exactly fit comfortably with young language learners because, on the one hand it is too formal and time-consuming, and on the other hand this age group cannot quite yet grasp the full meaning of the statements. Yet, it must be stressed that originally the FLCAS was designed having adult learners in mind. My advice, then, would be for teachers using it themselves to help them better interpret the behaviour of a particular pupil. The next step would be answering the questionnaire based on the pupil's behavioural pattern and deciding if he/she is struggling with language anxiety. The statements that best help me identify anxiety are: "It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class"; "I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class"; and "I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language" (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986, pp. 129-130). Another possibility is asking students about how they felt doing certain speaking activities in the classroom. The replies may reveal indications of anxiety. For example, "tenho vergonha de falar em Inglês" (I'm embarrassed to speak in English); "Inglês é a disciplina que me deixa mais nervoso/a" (English is the subject I feel most nervous); or even "tenho medo de errar porque os outros podem gozar comigo" (I'm afraid of making mistakes because my classmates may laugh and mock me). There are further signs to be taken into account by teachers experiencing similar situations of speaking anxiety in their classrooms in Portugal and abroad. Oxford (1999) indicates the following:

- **General avoidance:** "Forgetting" the answer, […] low levels of verbal production, lack of volunteering in class, seeming inability to answer even the simplest questions.

- **Physical actions:** Squirming, fidgeting, playing with hair, nervously touching objects, stuttering or stammering, displaying jittery behaviour, […].
- **Physical symptoms:** Complaining about headache, […] feeling unexplained pain or tension in any part of the body.
- **Other signs** […]: social avoidance, conversational withdrawal, lack of eye contact, hostility, […] image protection or masking behaviours (exaggerated smiling, laughing, nodding, joking), failing to interrupt when it would be natural to do so, […] self-criticism (I am so stupid) (p. 66).

Teachers ought to be attentive to these indicators in order to help students cope with tasks that are anxiety-provoking. Otherwise, the language learning experience will be dramatically unpleasant.

I do not think it requires much more justification to claim that spoken language anxiety has implications for classroom practice. Therefore, once the anxiety signs are identified, the challenge is to provide our students with a reduced-anxiety classroom environment. Oxford (1999) yields broad useful suggestions to foster low-anxiety levels that can be adapted to young language learners:

- Help students understand that language anxiety episodes can be transient;
- Boost self-esteem and self-confidence of students […] by providing multiple opportunities for classroom success in the language;
- Encourage moderate risk-taking […];
- Be very clear about classroom goals and help students develop strategies to meet those goals;
- Give students permission to use the language with less than perfect performance;
- Encourage students to relax through music, laughter or games;
- Give rewards that are meaningful to students and that help support language use (p. 67).

To these I would add a further aid to foster an emotional safe classroom – humour. In my own experience, as well as in literature (Dörnyei, 2001), bringing humour into the classroom is a step forward towards creating a relaxed learning atmosphere. “If

students can sense that the teacher allows a healthy degree of self-mockery and does not treat school as the most hallowed of all places" (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 41), they will not feel embarrassed if they make a mistake, while being more willing to take risks and explore the TL.

This is not to say that humour is the panacea for speaking anxiety. Despite its added value, with some classes teachers need to go the extra mile. Keeping in mind the needs of young learners between 10 and 14 years of age and the rationale offered throughout this section, I would say that the two core aspects of speaking anxiety, i.e., self-perceptions of linguistic ability and fear of making mistakes, must be tackled in a clearly defined manner. My strategy to address the former is proving the learners' negative beliefs wrong, by tailoring speaking activities which are achievable and conducive to the students' success, making them feel secure (work in small groups or in pairs), followed by positive reinforcement and finished with a reward for effective communication, while deemphasizing grammar rules and forms. I often send written messages to the parents praising the learner's good performance. By doing so confidence is boosted and so is their willingness to communicate. As for the latter, class cohesion is key. Explain to the class that "mistakes are part of the language learning process and that mistakes will be made by everyone" (Young, 1991, p. 432). For teachers this means not correcting every single mistake, otherwise we end up with a silent student fearful of being constantly criticised rather than a risk-committing one. Assist students to identify with one another in a process of "putting yourself in someone else's shoes", allowing empathy and rapport between classmates to flourish, and avoid comparisons, especially between stronger and weaker students. Unwittingly we may be dooming students' self-esteem to oblivion. Instead, cooperation should be promoted and competition downplayed. Nonetheless, it is fair to recognise that this is easier said than done given the grade-driven public expectation of schools nowadays discussed in the previous section. In classes involving speaking activities, especially the most stressful ones like role-plays or presentations, I always do a "Class Meeting" as a way to address concerns together, as a group and to promote sharing of feelings/thoughts towards speaking. An additional backup strategy I adopt is "Taking Turns". If any given student attempts to mock his/her classmate I ask the derider to take the speaker's place to help him focus on the classmate's feelings and

relate to his peer. Thus, potential mockery is controlled, self-confidence increases, tolerance prevails and trust between peers will be steadily built. Although it might take some time and patience, I strongly believe that a supportive environment amongst fellow classmates is a crucial factor in reducing classroom anxiety, which in turn is conducive to improved speaking proficiency.

Whether we are aware of it or not, speaking anxiety is an ever-present phenomenon in the language classroom. It can develop into a serious problem with severe pedagogical repercussions if not acknowledged, assessed, and approached effectively. As Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) point out, "if we are to improve foreign language teaching at all levels of education, we must recognize, cope with, and eventually overcome, debilitating foreign language anxiety as a factor shaping students' experiences in foreign language learning" (p. 132). Creating low-anxiety atmospheres conducive to low affective filters is a slow process, yet necessary to promote interest and motivation in learning and speaking a foreign language. Not all students who are unwilling to communicate and seem intentionally unresponsive to the teachers' stimuli, may in fact be concealing a heightened dread of speaking-related activities based on self-misconceptions of spoken ability. The challenge is understanding the roots of such behavioural patterns and then helping students to progressively adopt a different attitude. To make anxious students feel more comfortable, teachers should be patient, friendly, show a good sense of humour, encourage spoken production and/or interaction, accept mistakes as a natural part of the language learning process and be understanding towards students' needs and individuality. In a nutshell, when facing students displaying high levels of anxiety, one must try to foster a relaxed classroom environment, design activities aimed at success, dispel students' negative beliefs and enhance bonds of trust between peers, as well as with himself.

II. 5.3 – Speaking Beyond the Classroom: Friend or Foe?

Traditionally, the EFL/ESL classroom has been seen as the only source of meaningful language input, whilst the world outside is at the receiving end of the learners' knowledge, i.e., where language is put to use. However, the contexts where schools operate have changed and so have the students' background. Language-

related changes are rapidly taking place outside the classroom. Informal Education[64], addressed throughout literature (see Reinders and Benson's list (2017)) under a variety of different labels – extra-curricular, after-class, out-of-class, and the like, seems to be positively influencing students with their vocabulary, pronunciation, language functions and confidence to use spoken language, since it offers a variety of learning opportunities or affordances. The concept of affordance was coined by the American psychologist James Gibson (2015), but introduced to the field of applied linguistics by van Lier (2000) (2004), to whom "affordance refers to what is available to the person to do something with; […] more accurately, it is *action in potential* and it emerges as we interact with the physical and social world" (pp. 91-92). Taking an ecological perspective into account, one can argue that (spoken) language learning emerges from the reciprocity between learners and their environments (physical or digital). In this sense, language affordances may simply be considered possibilities for language use to be acted upon by different learner-users to allow further linguistic action.

Language learning beyond the classroom has steadily become an alternative or, as I rather perceive it in the light of the increased affordances for informal learning available today, a complement to the classroom. Thanks largely to technology, opportunities to use the TL, especially in its spoken form, are at the distance of a laptop and a few mouse clicks. Instead of one, we now have two intertwined dimensions of language learning – a formal one, occurring inside the classroom, and an informal one, occurring outside the classroom. Two decades ago, Preisler (1999) already discussed these two types of contact with the TL (in this case English) in mainland Europe, naming them English from above and English from below, "[…] the former constituting the promotion of English by the hegemonic culture for purposes of 'international communication' (primarily through formal education), the latter representing the informal—active or passive—use of English as an expression of subcultural identity and style" (p. 259). In other words, Preisler

[64] The term Informal Education is used here as referring to the stimuli received by the students in L2 external to the classroom (videogames, cinema, music, and so forth) and not in the British sense of Youth Work. In Britain youth work is more concerned with parallel needs. Young people go voluntarily speak with a youth worker about problems related to unwanted pregnancy, alcohol, drugs, paperwork and housing. Sometimes school related matters are also discussed, but they are not the main issue. In Portugal this kind of work has no analogous match.

refers to the existing parallel learning of formal education taking place at schools via top-down language learning processes and informal education taking place beyond the classroom via bottom-up language learning processes, which may occur in small youth subcultures (hip-hop, sports, gaming, etc.) or even individually in accordance to personal preferences (listening to music, watching films, etc.).

I would say we are witnessing a shift in the way that EFL environments were perceived. In the past, language was learnt for out-of-class usage, whereas nowadays language learnt outside school borders is brought into the classroom. In Portugal, few students, if any, arrive for their first English lesson without knowing words and/or fixed conventional phrases in English. A comment is here in due course. It has become commonplace to suggest that in EFL contexts like the Portuguese there are limited opportunities for TL exposure outside the classroom. As it happens, in Portugal such statements do not exactly hold true, especially in the Algarve, where the economic motor is and always has been tourism. In cities like Albufeira or Portimão (my hometown) it is quite common to overhear far more interactions taking place in English, between NNS-NNS and NNS-NS, than in Portuguese. Recently, Richards (2015) claims that northern European countries, such as Finland and Denmark, have better listening and speaking skills than their southern counterparts Portugal and Italy due to differences in subtitling vs. dubbing English language TV series and cinema films. I do not know if this is the case in Italy, but at least in Portugal there is no dubbing. So, this claim is in my opinion unfounded and too overgeneralising. Indeed, the original soundtracks of both formats are kept and the subtitles are in Portuguese. Portuguese young language learners are extensively exposed to comprehensible input in English. Yet this is not to say that Portuguese learners achieve the same level of speaking proficiency as the Danish or Finnish learners do. The reason why this happens goes beyond the scope of my thesis, but it would be interesting to further explore this topic by putting it in the Portuguese research agenda. Perhaps, as hinted by Bailly (2011) in one of her two main conclusions:

> […] successful out-of-class learning depends on learners fulfilling at least three necessary conditions, or success factors: motivation, learning resources and learning skills. Some students can easily find or develop these

ingredients in their environment but others cannot. If one element is lacking then the learning process is likely to be interrupted (p. 129).

Few studies devoted to language learning beyond the classroom have been made, in particular to its effectiveness when compared to classroom learning (Benson, 2011). However, my vested interest in speaking and its intelligibility subset, has led me to try to understand possible reasons for the differences in spoken proficiency between my stronger and weaker students, who have in common a fairly similar classroom input and never lived outside their country or had prolonged stays in English-speaking countries. For the past four years I have been asking my most proficient and intelligible learners to speak about their experience on L2 spoken language teaching/learning. The procedure has been developed as a semi-structured interview[65] with 9th grade students (roughly 50), as far as possible distributed equally by gender. Although this is not a fully developed empirical study, some important inferences can be drawn. The most telling one is understanding that perhaps the biggest reason underlying better or worse oral proficiency in L2 amongst students is deeply rooted in their interests in out-of-class activities, which are tied with spoken language usage. These interests are grouped in three main categories – videogames, cinema and music. Eventually, with older students the social media may also play an important role. The first is more entrenched with boys, the third with girls and the second is common to both parties. The male group is very fond of warfare videogames whose features include "tag team" or "team" combat. Teams are made with players from all around the world forcing them to communicate amongst themselves in English, usually using skype[66]. Such a necessity directs students to systematically use English and develop qualitative aspects like fluency to a degree almost impossible to achieve within the classroom. By comparison, the driving force for girls is music, but the outcome is remarkably similar. According to the students, their determination to keep up with

[65] The interview was conducted in English and took place at school to foster a relaxed environment, almost like a chat. The students were guided to address the topic at hand, yet with enough freedom to express their opinion about their own perception on learning Speaking as well as its use within the classroom. They were also asked to say what are the stimuli external to school that exert more influence on their speaking proficiency. Finally, they were asked to express their opinion about the importance they attribute to those stimuli in comparison to those received at school.

[66] One of the students claims to speak to team players with origins so different as Saudi Arabia, China or Colombia.

their favourite bands, of which One Direction is the most notorious, reading magazines, understanding the lyrics and reading the collections "Fan Fictions", makes them improve vocabulary and grammar structures, which inevitably improves their oral skills. Additionally, they claim to actively participate, almost on a daily basis, in forums and blog groups for fans, interacting with their foreign counterparts in English, like the boys also through skype[67]. Finally, with regard to cinema all students reiterate the importance of watching films in English to enhance vocabulary by relating what is being said to the subtitles. Some students even say they sometimes try to watch some parts without subtitles, using these only when necessary to understand the general idea. This statement further supports my disagreement with Richards's claim alluded above. I do agree with Richards (2015) though when he suggests that "using English for social interaction in out-of-class situations provides many opportunities for learners to maintain and extend their proficiency" (p. 8).

Another interesting conclusion drawn from this relatively small sample of students is their perception on L2 learning of speaking. Despite gender, all students share the common belief that their spoken ability improvements depend much more on what they do in an informal context than the other way around. Students claim that their pastime activities are more appealing and challenging comparing with what the curriculum has to offer them, either in content or stimuli. Using an analogy with a pair of scales, students were asked to correlate and attribute a percentage to the combination internal/external factors contribution to L2 speaking proficiency. The ratio ranged from 60/40 to 70/30 favouring external factors. Students have gone beyond the threshold of what they are learning at school. Yet amongst the interviewees exists a general sense of curiosity and motivation associated with the English class. In their own words, classes provide them with the basics, whilst their out-of-class interests allow them to achieve an advanced level of speaking proficiency and intelligibility because they have to use English as the medium of interaction. Besides, some students indicate that it is easier to speak in these relaxed environments where they are not constantly judged. Such statements positively correlate with the argument presented in the previous section that an anxiety-free

[67] Besides skype, students from both genders claim to interact with friends from English-speaking countries through the social network Facebook as well.

classroom promotes spoken language use. The potential fear of making mistakes in front of peers does not exist.

In light of the rationale offered so far, it is fair to say that informal education has a number of characteristics to be taken into account:

- Motivation – Learners are more motivated to use the TL, both instrumentally and integratively. Instrumentally motivated for pragmatic gains (understanding lyrics, gaming, and the like), and integratively motivated by a sense of belonging to an international youth (sub)culture(s), through technology, who share similar preferences displayed using English;
- Authenticity – Learners have the opportunity to get closer to everyday communication. Not only are they exposed to authentic aural input, but also have the chance to put authentic oral output into practice well beyond the typical formulaic and/or display utterances of the classroom. Out of the aural-oral authenticity binomial, authentic multimode interaction naturally occurs;
- Autonomy – Although it might be said that informal education provides unstructured opportunities for using the spoken language, it is also true that these are an asset for autonomous learning. Learners decide what to do, when and with whom they want to interact;
- Collaborative Learning – Many of the learners' out-of-class interests involve collaboration and negotiation of meaning to achieve common goals. Videogames are an example of the potential of collaborative learning. "Players seem to orient to the situation-specific opportunities for language learning afforded by the game and employ these affordances creatively in organizing their own activities, for example, by recycling game vocabulary between themselves in interaction while playing" (Kuure, 2011, p. 37).

Whether or not there is a direct correlation between informal education and better overall school results in the English class is as yet a strong claim to make. Nonetheless, at least as far as speaking proficiency is concerned, the difference of

proficiency in the spoken language amongst my stronger and weaker students seems to hint at a positive correlation between informal education and enhanced speaking proficiency and intelligibility.

The brave new world of informal education offers increasing learning affordances for learners, but it poses new challenges for teachers as well. On the one hand, recognising the presence and potential of informal education to make connections to what they teach in the classroom; on the other hand, acquiring new skills to guide "learners in effective ways of using out-of-class learning to support their in-class learning" (Richards J. , 2015, pp. 20-21). In-between the unstructured opportunities for practising the spoken language made available by informal education and the structured ones offered by the classroom, there is a gap to be filled by semi-structured opportunities of language study and practice. Video recordings are but a narrow example of possible semi-structured activities to target speaking in general and intelligibility in particular. In accordance with topics related to the students' interests, they may be asked to record out-of-class videos of themselves saying what they think about it. The videos may be uploaded using any video-sharing website, say, YouTube. In class the videos are watched by the teacher and peers, who comment on the overall performance as well as on specific items like vocabulary (appropriacy to the topic), grammar, speech rate, self-repair, and pronunciation (focus on intelligibility). Students are guided on what they have to do, but they are given enough freedom to take risks and explore the language in the spoken medium at their own will. Once in class, the content of these out-of-class videos may be further explored in debates between students with different points of view, which afford for opportunities to practice turn-taking, interaction conventions and politeness. Depending on the context, plenty of other activities are possible, for instance contact assignments. In my opinion, the added value of informal education is unquestionable. Yet not all teachers think in the same way. "There are those who have a developed view of the contribution of informal methods and contexts to curriculum development; others view their prime purpose as teaching a subject and perceive informal methods as marginal" (Burley, 1990, p. 61). Portugal is no exception. Among most EFL teachers the value of the language knowledge acquired outside the classroom seems to deserve little attention.

Classroom-based learning and informal learning are two sides of the same coin. They belong together and complement each other. It is time for these two sides to communicate more easily, and thus better supporting the students' learning continuum. Contemporary teachers should acknowledge and embrace the changes taking place in and outside the school premises and take advantage of students' L2 linguistic background. Nowadays, (spoken) language learning is likely to occur in many contexts beyond the classroom, whose relevance for the learners is far greater than the existing in the formal curriculum. A shift from the old paradigm which held the teacher as the only holder of knowledge must happen. Students are no longer mere recipients; they have an active role in their learning process. Whether or not it is recognised by governments and teachers, informal education is here to stay and likely to expand. The benefits of informal education include more motivation, participation, autonomy and active engagement with learning. Answering the question-like title that set the tone for this section, I strongly believe that speaking beyond the classroom is clearly positive for the students' improved proficiency and intelligibility. Students seem to already perceive informal education as a friend; so, I would say it is a mistake if teachers see it as a foe instead.

II. 5.4 – Spoken Interaction and the Intelligibility Principle

Traditional structural approaches (such as Audiolingualism) to teaching EFL, which aimed at achieving native-like accuracy, have steadily given way to intelligible communication goals. Concerns about intelligibility can be traced back as early as 1949 to pronunciation experts such as Abercrombie, for whom language learners needed "no more than a comfortably intelligible pronunciation" (p. 120). More recently (1987), in line with Abercrombie, Kenworthy also advocates comfortable intelligibility as a far more realistic aim for most language learners (p. 3). In a globalised world, where NNS clearly surpass their native counterparts in number and account for almost 80 per cent of all spoken interaction in English, the hegemony of native-like models seems debatable. Most (Portuguese) language learners have the strong but realistic desire to be able to communicate efficiently and, therefore, be understood by their interlocutors (mutual intelligibility).

Research in applied language settings commonly uses intelligibility as a measure to determine the oral proficiency of any given individual in English, as well as emphasizing its importance in cross-cultural communication. Smith (1976) contends that the goal for teaching English "is to extend the ability of our students to communicate their ideas and their culture" (p. 42). Newer pedagogical stances should reflect such a view, complying with the need to prepare learners to communicate with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. It could, then, be argued that intelligibility is key to being communicatively competent, perhaps even critical in intercultural spoken interaction. Surprisingly, it took almost two decades for the CEFR to reflect the research advances in this field of Applied Linguistics. As the reference document for all of Europe's FL syllabi, guidelines, assessment scales and materials, especially textbooks, for years it downplayed the role of NNS in verbal exchanges with Native Speakers (NS). It claimed to describe "in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 1), but it did so in compliance to NS standards. A close reading of a couple of descriptors reveals how the Council of Europe (2001), through the CEFR, implied that the yardstick for successful communication was NS centred:

> Conversation (Level B2) – Can sustain relationships with native speakers without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with a native speaker. […]
>
> Sociolinguistic Appropriateness (Level C2) – Appreciates fully the sociolinguistic and sociocultural implications of language used by native speakers and can react accordingly (pp. 76-122).

This is to say that the speaker was only deemed intelligible if understood by its NS interlocutors. The NNS was expected to: a) avoid amusing and/or irritating the NS; and b) appreciate his/her mastery of language use. Using a metaphor, NS are perceived as the language masters, whilst the NNS are the language apprentices whose only hope for correctness and appropriateness is to emulate their masters, at risk of displeasing them and not recognising the full worth of their intrinsic qualities. Despite its unifying intentions, the CEFR is not a neutral document, failing to reflect

the spread of English worldwide and, thus, conceding equal language use rights for all of its speakers. This implicit view of NNS in the CEFR is no trivial matter since the Common Reference Levels are the core of the framework and its best-known trademark. Briefly, the framework is made of a global scale of six different progressive levels – A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2 (figure 15), each associated with a set of descriptors. Each descriptor is expressed in "can-do" statements for reception, interaction, and production. Although mediation (done via translation and/or interpretation) is discussed, no descriptors are provided for mediation concepts and communication. These broadband proficiency levels serve a twofold function – provide descriptors of performance (usually task-based) and are the barometer against which the learner is measured for his/her ability. The learner moves up the proficiency scale accordingly.

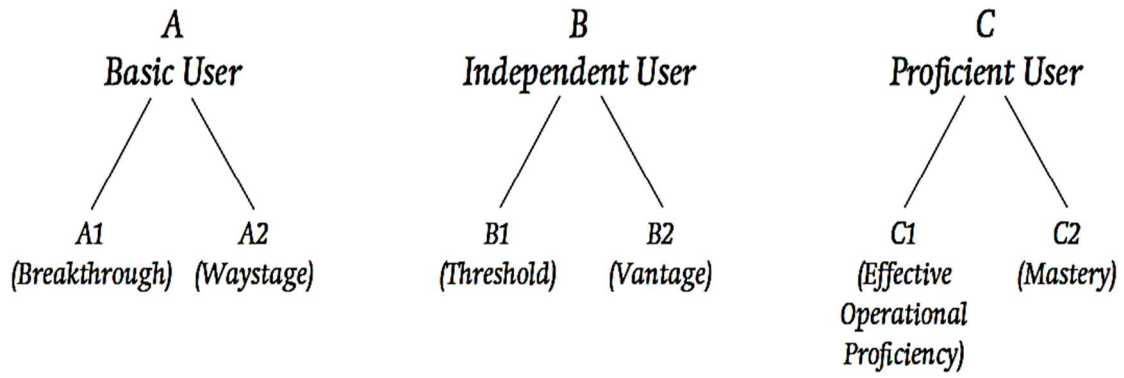

Figure 15 – Common European Framework of Reference Levels

A close examination of the definitions offered for the six levels hint at a dividing line between A1, A2 and lower part of B1 levels and upper part of B1, B2, C1 and C2 levels. The former is concerned with informal language usage attributing little importance to literacy skills, and the latter is concerned with formal language usage progressively matching proficiency with literacy skills. Cummins's (1979) earlier work on Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) versus Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) is perhaps no stranger to this divide. In the same vein, much more recently, Hulstijn (2011) speaks of Basic Language Cognition (BLC) and Higher Language Cognition (HLC):

> BLC pertains to (a) the largely implicit, unconscious knowledge in the domains of phonetics, prosody, phonology, morphology, and syntax; (b) the largely explicit, conscious knowledge in the lexical domain (form-meaning

mappings), in combination with (c) the automaticity with which these types of knowledge can be processed.

HLC is the complement or extension of BLC. HLC is identical to BLC, except that (a) in HLC, utterances that can be understood or produced contain low-frequency lexical items or uncommon morphosyntactic structures, and (b) HLC utterances pertain to written as well as spoken language. In other words, HLC utterances are lexically and grammatically more complex (and often longer) than BLC utterances and they need not be spoken (pp. 230-231).

With this rationale in mind, Hulstijn (2011) criticises the CEFR's conceptualization for two main reasons: a) not explicitly acknowledging these two types of cognition; and b) not explaining that the higher levels of the global scale will hardly be attainable by most language users, thus failing to distinguish between L2 development and L2 proficiency. In other words, C1 and C2 levels of proficiency are contingent upon the learner's HLC, as reflected by factors such as schooling, exposure to the TL and out-of-class activities, regardless of learning time and effort.

Questionably late, the new Common European Framework of Reference – Companion Volume (CEFR – CV) was launched at the beginning of 2018 (Council of Europe) and with it the much-needed changes to the 2001 descriptors (see appendix C below). The 2018 descriptors' nomenclature replaces NS for speakers only, speakers of the target language, proficient speakers, or even interlocutors. The two examples offered above are amongst those which have been updated to accommodate a World Englishes framework. Another specific change in terminology is the shift from non-standard accents to less familiar accents. This is clearly not a matter of chance but a recognition of the language's pluralisation. Additionally, a particularly significant aspect for this thesis has been developed in the CEFR – CV, that of phonology. Indeed, the phonological dimension of spoken language

had been the least successful scale developed in the research behind the original descriptors. The phonology scale was the only CEFR illustrative descriptor scale for which a native speaker norm, albeit implicit, had been adopted. In an update, it appeared more appropriate to focus on intelligibility

> as the primary construct in phonological control, in line with current research, especially in the context of providing descriptors for building on plurilingual/pluricultural repertoires (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 47).

The phonological control depicted in the CEFR (2001) based on an idealised NS norm, whose focus is on accuracy and accent instead of on intelligibility is evident, say, in the B2 level descriptor – "Has acquired a clear, natural, pronunciation and intonation" (p. 117). One could ask clear and natural to whom? Clear and natural in accordance with which standards? For years phonology remained a grey area, untouched by the development of research and the spread of English itself. Thus, my main quibble with the Council of Europe's dilatory action is grounded in my concern as to whether present approaches to English teaching and learning, particularly in FL environments, still reflect the implied normativity of the former (CEFR), instead of embracing calls for the acceptance of new Englishes worldwide hinted by the latter (CEFR – CV), thus foisting outdated aims on EFL students which do not serve their present-day needs.

In the new CEFR – CV phonology has got a descriptor scale on its own right under the heading Phonological Control. This scale is subdivided into three categories – overall phonological control, sound articulation and prosodic features (stress, intonation, and rhythm). Overall phonological control comprises intelligibility, influence of other languages spoken (particularly the speaker's L1), sound control and prosody control; sound articulation refers to the range of sounds available in the speaker's inventory clearly and precisely articulated; prosodic features focus on the speaker's ability to effectively use prosody to convey different shades of meaning. Organised in this fashion, the categories which inform the scales are identified, a progression along the phonological competence continuum is easily traced, a snapshot of overall phonological control is offered, and specific aspects in potential need of improvement are pinpointed (sounds and prosody). Despite recognising the added value of this new Phonological Control scale, I do have to voice my wariness about the definition offered for intelligibility – "how much effort is required from the interlocutor to decode the speaker's message" (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 135). There seems to be a conflation of two well-known dimensions of general intelligibility throughout literature, that of intelligibility in the narrow

sense and comprehensibility. Piccardo (2016), the author of the *Phonological Scale Revision Process Report* that resulted in the CEFR – CV's Phonological Control scale, claims to have decided "not to apply the academic distinction between intelligibility and comprehensibility in the scales, since this might confuse teachers" (p. 16). I wonder if the application of ill-defined key concepts for spoken language, such as intelligibility, will not have an undesirable effect. By mixing different criteria into one sole concept, are we truly assisting teachers or are we just adding to the confusion instead? If we believe, as I do, that a vast majority of lower and upper-secondary school teachers are still hesitant to teach pronunciation (Murphy, 1997) (Burgess & Spencer, 2000) (Macdonald, 2002) (Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011) (Derwing & Munro, 2015), thus failing to help their students to become more intelligible, we must feed them with concrete terminology that offers reassurance not more shaky ground to move on. Serious impact on teaching procedures in the classroom is made of simple, practical things. I am under the impression that Piccardo has drawn heavily on the definitions put forward by Derwing and Munro (discussed below), perhaps not realising they may do more harm than good if encapsulated together.

An understanding of the TL's phonological system seems, then, central for both teachers and learners. For the purposes of this research, not only English but also European Portuguese (Brazilian Portuguese and its phonological nuances are beyond the scope of this thesis) is encompassed in this brief analysis in a comparison and contrast-like fashion. European Portuguese, apart from the odd exception of Azores and Madeira islands, has got a rather steady phonological system, whose regional accents are fully intelligible, thus not impairing in any way spoken interaction. Generally, the language is characterised by a lax articulation which affects vowel quality and voicing. European Portuguese has got 14 monophthongs, 9 oral[68] and 5 nasalised, and 14 phonemic diphthongs, 10 oral and 4 nasalised[69]. European Portuguese´s array of monophthongs and diphthongs is

[68] I must be said that the vowel /ɛ/ when pronounced in a final position as a high central vowel becomes /ɨ/, for instance the Portuguese word *de*. The /ɨ/ vowel is less audible and articulated higher than its English counterpart schwa /ə/.

[69] An individual account of each monophthong and diphthong is given at Instituto Camões under the heading *A Pronúncia do Português Europeu* (available at <http://cvc.instituto-camoes.pt/cpp/acessibilidade/capitulo3_2.html>)

matched at a distance by English. English has got a total of 20 vowel phonemes (see appendix A – International Phonetic Alphabet, but there are other counts), 12 monophthongs and 8 diphthongs[70] (for a deeper analysis see appendix B – British and American English phonemic charts). Unsurprisingly, given its global spread, despite lesser number of vowel phonemes, English has a much wider variation in pronunciation. Such regional variation may have a toll on intelligibility if no accommodation strategies are employed – monitoring, repetition, word choice, self-repairs, and the like, because this vast number of speakers will necessarily lexicalise words with different phonemes in accordance with his/her variety and even individual local particularities. In fact, the number of vowel phonemes itself available for the speakers is not even across regions (see footnote 68).

European Portuguese and English have in common the fact of being two of the few stress-timed languages of the world, i.e., both have consecutive stressed syllables at regular intervals, irrespective of the length that unstressed syllables between them may have. These unstressed syllables tend to vowel reduction which in turn are either centralised or in some cases omitted. Although European Portuguese and English share this rhythmic feature, they do have differences in other prosodic traits, such as intonation. Speakers produce intonational meaning in compliance with their communicative intentions. According to Cruz-Ferreira (2002), these phonological clues for the interpretation of meaning have two major differences, in tonicity and tone. Cruz-Ferreira claims that for tonality the two intonational systems are equivalent (p. 218). The difference in tonicity lies in the mobility of the nucleus within the intonation group. In European Portuguese it occupies a fixed final position (typically the last stressed syllable), whilst in English any word can carry the nuclear tone. As for tone, even though both languages make use of rising and falling tones, the way they may be combined is not the same nor can they be used under the same communicative circumstances, at risk of conveying significant different meanings. Apart from directly influencing intonation patterns, indirectly tonicity influences yet another ingredient of the phonological cocktail, that of sentence stress. The differences in tonicity in both languages repercuss to

[70] The diphthong /eə/ is mostly British, in North America it tends to be pronounced /ɛr/. Drawing on my experience as a teacher, I would dare to say that many NNS, me included, do not pronounce it either, using /ɛr/ alternatively. For instance, the words there, /ðɛr/ not /ðeə/, or parent, /ˈpɛr(ə)nt/ not /ˈpeər(ə)nt/. As it happens, American English has fewer diphthongs than British English.

sentence stress. Hence, sentence stress in European Portuguese is expressed mainly at the end of the sentence, whereas in English sentence stress shifts to accommodate different pragmatic functions (e.g., contrast)[71]. But prosody is not complete without lexical stress. As regards this realm of phonology, both languages are phonemic, i.e., the stress position in a word is more often than not unforeseeable. Take European Portuguese for instance, most words are stressed in the penultimate syllable but in truth lexical stress may fall in any of the last three. This is to say that lexical stress for European Portuguese and English must be memorised individually as an integral part of one's pronunciation chart, including the Portuguese diacritics. A final phonological feature of lexical stress for both languages worth mentioning is its distinctiveness. Speakers distinguish otherwise identical words due to the positioning of lexical stress. Examples can be found abundantly in one language – *dúvida* / *duvida*, *túnel* / *tonel* – and another – insight / incite, record / record. This last example is a common phonological process in English named initial-stress derivation, where a shift in stress occurs towards the first syllable of the same word, a verb (usually pairing up with nouns, but also adjectives), producing an otherwise indiscernible class-change contrast.

All this being said, where does it leave us? Given the phonological differences and similarities between languages, are the Portuguese learners well-equipped to become proficient and intelligible speakers of English? Put another way, is the English phonological system easy to apprehend? In an attempt to answer these questions, let us draw on Smith's (2005) discussion if English is in fact an appropriate *lingua franca*, taking into account: a) the characteristics of the language, and b) the foremost purpose of a *lingua franca* – enabling (unambiguous) communication between speakers with mutually unintelligible L1. Smith highlights six characteristics that would make a language suitable to be a *lingua franca*: maximum speakability, sensible orthography, regular inflection rules, uncomplicated grammar, non-ambiguity, and easiness to learn, claiming that English "fails dismally to meet any of them" (p. 58). Issues of language cannot be satisfactorily addressed without considering the whole, but my vested interest in intelligibility wittingly drives me to concentrate on Smith's first two criteria,

[71] In European Portuguese, such functions are achieved via syntactical devices (e.g., clefting).

speakability and orthography. English has a big number of vowel phonemes, thus making its pronunciation (speakability) difficult for most NNS. Compared to other languages (European or otherwise), say, Spanish or Japanese (five vowel phonemes each), English has an unusual larger number. This means that most English language learners from all sorts of L1 backgrounds have to pronounce sounds they are not familiar with, simply because they do not exist in their native languages. Curiously, Smith refers specifically to Romance languages, the linguistic branch to which European Portuguese is affiliated, holding that these speakers "cannot pronounce the omnipresent *schwa* (/ə/ as in ago and in but when unstressed) or distinguish between /I/ in sit and bit, and /i:/ in seat and beat (using the latter in all cases)" (ibid.). However, this is not the case with European Portuguese. As discussed above, European Portuguese matches and surpasses English's phonetic inventory, thus allowing Portuguese learners not to struggle with most vowel sounds, may they be short or long. Rarely have I found students with problems in differentiating bit /I/ and beat /i:/, nor have I had other communicative situations with other Portuguese speakers of English where this difficulty has presented itself. Problems experienced by other speakers (distinction between /æ/ in bad and /e/ in bed – Germans, distinction between /æ/ in ran and /ʌ/ in run – Japanese) do not seem to affect Portuguese speakers of English either. In the same vein, most consonantal sounds and consonant clusters do not seem to pose many problems too, albeit English consonant clusters like *ngths* as in strengths, *spl* as in split, and *sps* as in crisps may cause additional problems for speakers whose languages often have a vowel between consonants, such as European Portuguese. First, because the number of consonants and consonantal sounds are evenly matched between languages, an identical situation to what was discussed for vowel phonemes. Second, because European Portuguese tends to eliminate several of the vowels to be found in-between consonants. In fact, (unstressed) vowel syncope is a rather common phonological process in European Portuguese, thus mitigating the potential negative effect of this linguistic difference to intelligibility.

Drawing on my own experience, since there are no studies available to support or contest my claim, the pronunciation aspect Portuguese learners struggle the most with is the articulation of the consonant digraph /th/ as an interdental fricative, either voiced /ð/ or unvoiced /θ/. Plenty have I heard students telling me

they were “sinking” or “finking” or that they did not bring “da” book. Despite the remarkable number of phonemes available for European Portuguese speakers, which makes it easier to detect and articulate most sounds in English, these two phonemes in particular do not add up to the inventory. Thus, it is more difficult to develop a phonic awareness on them. Another major pronunciation problem for Portuguese learners is the use of the voiceless glottal fricative /h/. The problem is as much much its dropping in words which should have it, as in /iːt/ instead of /hiːt/ or /ɑːm/ instead of /hɑːm/, as it is its insertion where it does not occur, as in /hˈaʊə/ instead of /ˈaʊə/ or /hɛː/ instead of /ɛː/. The misuse of the/h/ sound may change the meaning of the word(s) used and that of the utterance, confusing the listener and ultimately leading to unintelligibility. Additionally, Bravo (2008) mentions a further difficulty in pronunciation for Portuguese learners of English, that of the vowel sound /ɜ/ as in bird or heard (p. 31). However, she does not provide any explanation or comment to account for the reason(s) that support her claim.

The second most troublesome problem of English for European Portuguese speakers, and I would say for all NNS in general, is the language’s irregular orthography. For Smith (2005), “[t]he striking non-correlation between its pronunciation and spelling is probably the language’s largest single disadvantage and a cause of endless misery for learners, from native infants to foreign business executives” (p. 59). Centuries ago, English had a high degree of grapheme-phoneme correspondence, but the language’s spread and consequent intensification of spoken interactions led to an increasing gap between them. Orthography has remained fairly stable over the years while the spoken form drifted away to distinct phonological realisations. English is now a highly non-phonemic language and most likely will continue to be so. Therefore, I advocate a freer pronunciation for EFL students based on intelligibility. As long as they are intelligible to whoever they are speaking to, regardless of the phonological system they adhere to or even mix, it is perfectly fine. In Portugal, many EFL teachers still hold on to British English pronunciation strictures. I seriously think that it is counterproductive, especially if we take into account the phonemic trait of European Portuguese. Unlike English, European Portuguese has largely kept its grapheme-phoneme correspondence, thus making it difficult for students to change their mindset when speaking in English

and memorise so many components of the language's lexicon. Clearly, the irregular orthography of English may affect Portuguese learners' intelligibility.

In light of the reasoning offered thus far, it is useful to explore the notion of intelligibility by introducing a definition of the terms currently used to address this construct in an attempt to avoid any impressionistic understanding of the concepts. Amongst educational scholars, the value of intelligibility for spoken interaction seems unquestionable. However, the terminologies and definitions of intelligibility are not as undisputed – "there is as yet no broad agreement on a definition of the term 'intelligibility': it can mean different things to different people" (Jenkins, 2000, p. 69). In a review by Cruz (2007, p. 155), the author reveals a host of ten alternative terms to address intelligibility, ranging from intelligibility itself to interpretability or even communicativity. However, this does not necessarily imply ten different definitions. For instance, Smith and Nelson's interpretability, described as "the meaning behind the word/utterance" (1985, p. 334), parallels Kenworthy's communication (1987, p. 16) and James's communicativity (1998, pp. 216-217).

But what exactly is meant by intelligibility? In its broadest sense, intelligibility can be simply defined as the felicitous decoding of sounds in a word and/or utterance. Yet such a superficial description of the paradigm may be misleading, as well as veil its intricacies. A more thorough review of the literature on intelligibility and its role in spoken interaction shows that the most influential definitions of this construct are those presented by Smith and Nelson (1985), and Derwing and Munro. The former conceptualize general intelligibility as a tripartite system comprising intelligibility – recognition of individual words and utterances; comprehensibility – understanding of meaning of individual words and utterances; and interpretability – understanding of the speaker's intentions behind words and utterances (p. 334). Bearing in mind the difficulty in measuring the speaker's intent, Levis (2006) claims that this last layer of Smith and Nelson's definition "has fallen by the wayside" (p. 254). For Derwing and Munro (2005b), intelligible speech has three different dimensions to be taken into account: intelligibility – "the extent to which a listener actually understands an utterance"; comprehensibility – "a listener's perception of how difficult it is to understand an utterance"; and accentedness – "a listener's perception of how different a speaker's accent is from

that of the L1 community" (p. 385). Derwing and Munro go on to state that the three dimensions are related but partially independent (p. 386). Their findings suggest that strong accents do not necessarily result in poor intelligibility. "Furthermore, two utterances that are fully intelligible might entail perceptibly distinct degrees of processing difficulty, such that they are rated differently for comprehensibility" (Munro, Derwing, & Morton, 2006, p. 112). Notwithstanding the differences highlighted here, it must be stressed that the two definitions are not mutually exclusive. Intelligibility, in the narrowest sense of both definitions is identical, comprising those distinctive characteristics of phonetics and phonology one needs to recognise the language we hear. Although Derwing and Munro's use of the verb understand may seem to conflate what Smith and Nelson address separately as intelligibility and comprehensibility, the procedure used by the former to measure intelligibility was a transcription into standard orthography of words heard in different utterances, which is the same kind of procedure supported and practised by the latter.

Intelligibility, then, seems an evasive paradigm, despite its widespread use and recognition as an appropriate goal for most language learners. Throughout literature, the polysemy of intelligibility makes it difficult to discern what is exactly meant by its use. Thus, I would argue, any study on intelligibility should clearly express the researcher's definition of the term. For present purposes, taking into account my own interpretation of the nature of speaking as a two-way process between speaker(s) and listener(s), like Derwing and Munro, I too view intelligibility as the amount of utterance understood by the listener. Nevertheless, to avoid the terminological misguidances mentioned above I rather use a more accurate verb – the amount of utterance identified by the listener. In the light of such a definition, speaker and listener, together with the spoken interactional context of situation (the utterance itself and the attitudes of the participants), are both involved and share responsibilities when interacting with one another. Indeed, "intelligibility may be as much in the mind of the listener as in the mouth of the speaker" (Morley, 1991, p. 499). In addition, my interest in intelligibility in the narrow sense is based on my conviction that it is determining for communicative success or failure. If one cannot map productive and receptive words and/or utterances onto one's phonological inventories, how can we attach any meaning to

what is being said or heard, let alone grasp intentions, or perceive difficulties of understanding and differences in accent. Although I choose to follow Derwing and Munro's definition of intelligibility in the narrow sense, I do have two objections to their overall construct. First, on account of the definition provided for comprehensibility, there seems to be a mismatch between concept and definition. If this dimension refers to difficulty in processing what is heard, perhaps, as suggested by Nelson (2011, p. 72), a phrase like Perceived Intelligibility Difficulty would be more appropriate. Second, I am at variance with the accentedness dimension because it fails to acknowledge that L1 speakers, not just L2, also display different accents in accordance with their English variety, fails to acknowledge that variety exposure and experience influence our perception of accent, and attributes the onus of deciding who has an accent to a supposed norm-providing L1 speaking community. I wonder how this dimension applies in ever-increasing speaking situations between individuals who do not belong to any particular L1 community, as the result of the post-geographic Englishes encounters alluded in section 2.1. Who will be the accent standard against which accentedness is measured in unexpected communicative interactions?

All in all, a hybrid version of the paradigms offered by Derwing and Munro and Smith and Nelson, tweaked to accommodate today's World Englishes, would eventually be more fitting. For the reasons presented by myself and Levis, I would discard Derwing and Munro's accentedness dimension and Smith and Nelson's interpretability layer. General intelligibility would then comprise three interrelated components: intelligibility (sensu stricto) – the amount of utterance identified by the listener; difficulty – the listener's perceived estimate of how hard it is to identify an utterance; and comprehensibility – the understanding of meaning attached to utterances by the listener.

The factors that are deemed to affect intelligibility the most deserve careful attention. However, like intelligibility itself, there is a lack of common ground about the contributory variables of intelligibility (negatively or otherwise). Perhaps, this state of affairs is not surprising. There is an extensive body of research available, but the studies and their results reveal several discrepancies. For instance, Anderson-Hsieh and Koehler (1988, p. 585) suggest that suprasegmental features (stress,

rhythm and intonation, also referred to collectively as prosody) contribute the most to intelligibility, while on the opposite end Fayer and Krasinski (1987, p. 322) suggest that the greatest contribution to intelligibility is made by segmental features (phonemes). Adding to the confusion, Zielinski, in her study of 2006 on interaction between speaker and listener, states that if "we were to consider only the listener ingredients we might conclude that the syllable stress pattern is of greater importance than the segments to intelligibility […] if we were to consider only the speaker ingredients we might conclude that segments are of greater importance than the syllable stress pattern" (p. 40). Again, firm conclusions seem impossible to draw. I would say it is pointless to try to establish a hierarchy between phonology and phonetics, as both (regardless of the extent) may impair intelligibility and, therefore, spoken interaction. The context of situation, along with the interlocutors will determine the factors affecting intelligibility the most in any given communicative situation. Despite these inconsistencies, the role played by both speaker and listener for the reduction or enhancement of intelligibility emerges throughout the literature as crucial. Bradlow and Pisoni (1999) assert that speakers tend to "modify their articulatory patterns to accommodate situational demands" (p. 2074), i.e., the speaker adjusts to the challenges of the context by adapting style, volume and speed of speech and articulatory precision. On the other hand, speakers with heavy accents and/or non-standard features in the speech signal, either suprasegmental or segmental, may create miscommunication. In addition, I strongly believe that speaking anxiety may affect the speaker's intelligibility. As I have advocated above and elsewhere (Correia, 2015), low self-confidence and self-efficacy have a clear bearing on speaking. Some speakers' frequent pauses and hesitations, resulting in reduced intelligibility, may positively correlate with speaking anxiety.

Amongst the listener-related factors affecting intelligibility, the lion's share goes to the effect of familiarity. Indeed, topic familiarity, speaker familiarity and particularly phonological familiarity influence the listener's ability to process the speaker's intended message. Bent and Bradlow (2003) found that familiarity of phonological forms (shared L1) between listener and speaker heightens intelligibility, giving rise to what they termed *matched interlanguage speech intelligibility benefit* (p. 1606). Their findings suggest an increase in intelligibility

when non-native listeners judge non-native speakers with whom they share the same native language. In a similar vein, these researchers also found that the interlanguage benefit may be extended to non-native listeners judging non-native speakers with whom they do not share the same native language, giving rise to what they termed *mismatched interlanguage speech intelligibility benefit* (p. 1606). Presumably, even if listener and speaker have different native language backgrounds, the shared knowledge of the target language phonology facilitates intelligibility. Listeners' attitudes (irritation and/or prejudice) towards the speaker influence intelligibility too. If the listener "expects to understand a speaker, he/she is much more likely to find the speaker intelligible than if he/she does not expect to understand him" (Smith & Nelson, 1985, p. 333). This is especially evident in spoken interactions where the listener is native and the speaker is non-native, despite the speaker's level of proficiency. Notwithstanding the fact that NS of English are increasingly less when compared to the growing numbers of NNS, their sense of ownership over the language still seems to run deep. NS refuse to acknowledge the fact that language ownership rests with the people who use it, either NS or NNS. Conceivably, Quirk's ideological perspective on language deficits continues to be mirrored in current intelligibility judgements towards NNS, who continue to be seen as foreigners just for the sake of birthplace, irrespectively of their proficiency. Yet "for at least the last two hundred years there have been English-speaking people in some parts of the world who have not been intelligible to other English-speaking people in other parts of the world" (Smith, 1992, p. 75).

Some other additional variables may affect intelligibility to a greater or lesser extent, like fatigue, attentiveness, or noise. This latter variable is more salient with non-native listeners, who, regardless of their proficiency in the target language, will experience difficulty whenever listening conditions become progressively worse (Bond, Moore, & Gable, 1996, p. 2510).

The rationale offered thus far suggests a need to reconsider traditional ELT methodologies based on native-like speaking models, as they have significant implications for practice. Yet, as Seidlhofer (2001) puts it, there is still a conceptual gap between practice and research – "Fundamental issues to do with the global spread and use of English have, at long last, become an important focus of research

in applied linguistics […] And yet, the daily practices of most of the millions of teachers of English worldwide seem to remain untouched by this development […] This state of affairs has resulted in a conceptual gap in the discourse of ELT […]" (pp. 133-134). Perhaps, I would argue, some EFL practitioners do not feel comfortable going beyond what they experienced as learners themselves and now perpetuate this as teachers, while others are simply caught in a predicament between what they believe is best and more helpful for their students (moving away from native-speaker norms) and obsolete educational guidelines foisted upon them by government policies.

Assuming the development referred to by Seidlhofer, Jenkins's (2002, pp. 96-98) Lingua Franca Core (LFC) could be an appropriate starting point for intelligibility in determining pedagogical priorities for the classroom. The LFC stems from a three-year-long collection of data aimed at understanding which features, either phonological or phonetic, caused reduced intelligibility or communication breakdown during spoken interaction. The more threatening non-standard features for mutual intelligibility are considered core – most consonant sounds (essential for intelligibility), consonant deletion (initial consonants must not be deleted), vowel quantity (contrast between long and short vowels – "leave" / "live") and nuclear stress (placement of stress to signal meaning), while the less threatening ones are considered non-core – consonant sounds "th" both fortis and lenis (not critical for intelligibility, have a low functional load), vowel quality (L2 vowel quality variety acceptable), word stress (individual word stress is not crucial for intelligibility) and weak forms (vowel sound changes resulting in schwa, not troublesome for intelligibility). Yet, bearing in mind my claims above on pronunciation difficulties for Portuguese learners and the evidence gathered (see section IV. 4), I have to disagree with Jenkins's categorisation of the digraph /th/. As far as Portuguese learners are concerned, I seriously believe that its pronunciation, either voiced /ð/ or unvoiced /θ/, should be considered core, as it may impair intelligibility. From a classroom perspective, even in EFL environments where English is not used as an official language of communication, the LFC may represent a step forward for intelligible spoken interaction. Instead of being measured by the ability to use native-like pronunciation features, students will benefit if their needs are matched by the priority areas highlighted by Jenkins. As for the teachers, it is primarily a

matter of re-thinking practices by providing students with the opportunities to engage in meaningful learning.

As it happens, even though Portugal's learning/teaching context is an EFL one, the learners' actual context of TL use in the real-world is an ELF one. Learners will resort to English as the medium of communication between speakers of different L1 backgrounds, which may even include NS of English. The assertions made by my students about their use of the language (referred to in the previous section) support my claim. In the same vein, Brumfit (2002) points out that "[…] the internet, mobile phones and other technology increasingly establishes the potential for use of English which is quite independent of the controls offered by traditional educational systems […]" (p. 5). I would say that a change in instructional perspective is required. There seems to be a mismatch between the way students learn the language (EFL tradition, still trapped in the Modern Foreign Languages paradigm) and the way students use the language (ELF innovation, shares the ideology of the World Englishes paradigm). It is Jenkins (2006, p. 140) who, based on the global spread of English, lays out the differences between EFL and ELF (figure 16).

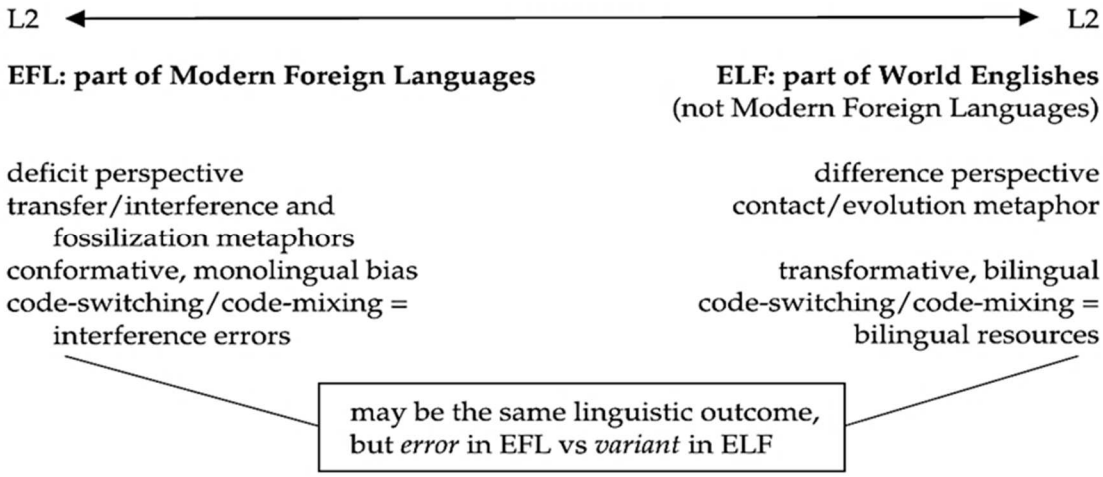

Figure 16 – EFL contrasted with ELF

ELF is conceptually distinct from EFL. While EFL takes on a deficit perspective submissive to NS norms, ELF takes on a difference perspective non-compliant to NS standards. From the EFL standpoint the learner is inevitably doomed to be an outsider, "a linguistic tourist – allowed to visit, but without rights of residence and required always to respect the superior authority of native speakers" (Graddol,

2006, p. 83). By the same token, the learner is constructed to produce failure in his attempt to emulate an imposed rather impossible native-speaker-like pronunciation. Pedagogic practices must not foist such strictures upon learners. Intelligibility should be the criterion against which new educational and social expectations are met. Indeed, intelligibility is a means by which spoken language proficiency is demonstrated, and thus a valuable tool for analysis of potential misunderstandings in spoken interactions between various combinations of speakers.

The spread of English, resulting in an increasing number of new users of the language, has opened the gateway for the decline of a nativeness principle in favour of an intelligibility principle. NS are no longer the sole custodians of English. Although the definition of intelligibility may be the subject of disagreement, the acceptance of this notion as a fundamental requirement for spoken interaction is uncontested. In fact, without intelligibility, communication is most likely to fail. Hence, the debate over which variables may or may not impair intelligibility is a fierce one. The role played by segmental and suprasegmental features has merited careful attention, although the conclusions reported in most studies are far from consistent. I argue in favour of a broader view which considers speaker and listener factors along with the interactional context. As a dynamic negotiated process, intelligibility requires shared responsibilities from both parties.

Hopefully, the focus given to intelligibility in the field of applied linguistics will have an impact on teachers' practices. Now or in the near future, teachers need to align English language teaching methodologies with new learning paradigms, which do not necessarily conform to native-speaker norms. The pronunciation activities done in the classroom should reflect the sociolinguistic reality of the learners, "rather than focus on the features of an idealized native speaker variety" (Rajadurai, 2007, p. 96).

II. 6 – Closing Remarks

Following a recursive text organisation (general to particular), usually found in academic English discourse, chapter II narrowed down the broad presentation of

English made in the first chapter, detailing the many facets of the oral side of language. Notwithstanding, the chapter began with a characterisation of most relevant methods and approaches to FL teaching in an attempt to depict how speaking's significance has changed over time as a result of constant emerging teaching fads. Since the genesis of L2 teaching methods – the Grammar-translation method, moving through the Direct Method to Audiolingualism and outside mainstream alternatives (Silent Way, Suggestopedia an TPR), the focus given to speaking grew exponentially. This growth was consolidated by new approaches that focused primarily on the communicative functions of language, of which CLT became the most prominent. CLT drew heavily on Hymes's theory of communicative competence, so it comes as no surprise that claims to emphasise speaking have attached themselves to the term. Accordingly, the chapter moved on to deconstruct what is involved by the concept of communicative competence, suggesting a move from communicative competence to language proficiency.

Issues of non-nativeness were then tackled from a language proficiency point of view. The assumption that NS are innately better teachers based on the native-speakerism ideology was contested, as both NS and NNS teachers have strengths and weaknesses. NS may have a proficiency advantage, but it does not equate with being able teachers. Yet NNS teachers cannot have a poor or hesitant command of spoken English, at risk of disrupting lessons and hampering students' learning progress. NNS can be as good, or even better English teachers than their NS counterparts, if they are highly proficient and intelligible speakers.

The need to expand intercultural awareness set the tone for the chapter's next section. It was argued that FLT cannot confine its interest to grammar, vocabulary or knowledge of the rules of language use, as it has hitherto. But unfortunately, at least in Portugal, raising intercultural awareness still seems dependent on the textbook. Thus, being left to chance and included in a rather fragmented manner, reflecting big "C" cultural trivia only. The potential role of English as a shared medium of communication to enhance mutual understanding of similarities and differences was also pointed out, from the EFL classroom's standpoint. The value of being both proficient and intelligible was reiterated as a necessary means to grapple with the complexities of intercultural communication.

The final part of the chapter explored in detail some of speaking's most fundamental matters for the scope of this study. It began by putting speaking's intrinsic traits forward, highlighting the differences between them and those of writing, especially the most distinctive of all – speaking takes place in real-time. In fact, it is speaking's time-bound nature of processing conditions that makes it the most challenging skill for learners. From here, the chapter developed to issues of speaking assessment by considering its purposes and methods. A need to deemphasise tests and align learning with assessment were clearly argued for. However, the current lack of assessment literacy in Portuguese EFL classrooms makes it difficult to mount a case against tests on the one hand and know how to assess, analyse and interpret the results from the assessments, and apply this data to improve students' learning on the other. The influence of anxiety on speaking is then considered. Although practically dismissed in Portuguese research, it was here addressed for its negative potential impact on speaking proficiency. Anxiety adversely affects almost all spoken language processes and the students' willingness to communicate. Whether EFL teachers are aware of it or not, speaking anxiety is an ever-present phenomenon in the language classroom, because speaking is the skill that most exposes the FL learner. It must be identified and approached effectively to avoid hindering the learning process. Towards the end of the chapter, the role of informal education for spoken language proficiency was put into perspective. It was concluded that language affordances are available both in and out of the classroom, which may and should be seen as complementary. Unlike what happened just a couple of decades ago, thanks largely to technology, opportunities to use the TL in its spoken form outside the classroom are now at the distance of a laptop and a few mouse clicks. Apparently, students' speaking proficiency and intelligibility benefits from these out-of-class stimuli. Finally, the chapter ends by addressing the concept of intelligibility itself. The importance of intelligibility for spoken interaction was discussed and a move from native-like pronunciation advocated. Intelligibility was taken as the measure against which spoken language proficiency should be measured, which must have strong implications for practice. To avoid any impressionistic understanding of intelligibility, the paradigm was defined and the variables that affect it (positively or negatively) pinpointed, despite the little common ground in this field of study amongst applied linguist researchers. At the

same time a connection to the CEFR/CEFR-CV and phonology was also made, opening a window to how intelligibility has been interpreted in the main European language-related document and to the (di)ssimiliarities of English and Portuguese's phonological systems.

Altogether, the second chapter focused on the need for a reconceptualization of speaking with a World Englishes frame of mind. It functions as a challenge to traditional views over language ownership and teaching/learning practices by claiming a need to rethink approaches to (Portuguese) students' oral proficiency grounded in an intelligibility principle.

Part 2: The Face of Oral Proficiency in the EFL Portuguese Classroom

III – Research Methodology and Design

III. 1 – Opening Remarks

Scientific research demands for a solid methodological approach that meets the researcher's needs, whether they are an early career researcher or otherwise. Thus, after choosing the topic or area to study, it is important to think carefully about how to undertake research without violating key principles of scientific inquiry. How the topic or area to study is perceived and how it can be studied will influence the researcher's research methodology and design. In light of these considerations, it is appropriate to assert that there is no such thing as the accurate paradigm and/or methodology to best answer the central questions of the study, despite the perpetuated dichotomy, often fuelled in academic journals, between qualitative and quantitative research methodology. Yet "applied linguists have by and large steered clear of such extreme positions" (Dörnyei Z. , 2007, p. 10).

Following Dörnyei's rationale, my research is informed by a pragmatic paradigm, which in turn involves a mixed-methods research methodology. The use of qualitative and quantitative research methods is my attempt to address the topic of the study (speaking and its pronunciation subset from an intelligibility frame of mind) and finding answers to its central questions by taking advantage of both approaches' strengths in a complementary fashion while compensating for their weaknesses. Furthermore, I try to redress the imbalance between the two in the study of classroom contexts. In their review on instructional contexts of classrooms, Turner and Meyer (2000) found a tendency to rely heavily on quantitative methods (e.g., self-report surveys and questionnaires), highlighting the need to combine quantitative with qualitative methods, as these "are more likely to take a systemic approach to understanding the interaction of variables in a complex environment" (p. 79).

In accordance with the above, chapter III is devoted to the description of the research methodology that governs the study. Thus, it begins with a brief examination of research paradigms, providing an explanation on the one adopted, and a discussion of the role of paradigms in educational research. Aligned with the study's paradigmatic stance, the chapter further develops the methodological

research approaches implemented. In the same vein, determined by the chosen paradigm, research methodology and methods thought of most appropriate for the study are set forth. Next, I describe the context to which I gained access, including the participants (students and teachers) and the setting. Finally, the data collection instruments are appraised, namely their practical implementation, design and limitations.

Limiting the scope of the project, the third chapter stands for the methodological underpinning of the thesis. Its function is to show how the subject is addressed and to justify the steps and decisions taken based on my own positioning as both a teacher and researcher.

III. 2 – Research Paradigm

Empirical research is different from other forms of knowing. It may be characterised as the pursuit of knowledge through a process of well-ordered inquiry to collect data about a given phenomenon. The data is then analysed, interpreted, and reported as a means to "understand, describe, predict or control [that] educational or psychological phenomenon or to empower individuals in such contexts" (Mertens, 2009, p. 2). But before choosing approaches to study the selected phenomenon one must nominate a paradigm, i.e., our view and beliefs about how we perceive and frame the problem, which in turn will dictate methodology and methods used taking into consideration ontological (assumptions about the nature of social reality), epistemological (distinction between justified belief and opinion about the nature of knowledge) and axiological (ethics and value systems) issues. Although recognizing some lack of consensus vis-à-vis the connection between the researcher's underlying paradigm and his/her methodological choices, it is my conviction that, even unknowingly, every researcher has some kind of philosophical assumptions and that these have a marked effect on the decisions made during the research process. Schwandt (2000) coincides with my position by claiming that

> as one engages in the "practical" activities of generating and interpreting data to answer questions about the meaning of what others are

> doing and saying and then transforming that understanding into public knowledge, one inevitably takes up "theoretical" concerns about what constitutes knowledge and how it is to be justified, about the nature and aim of social theorizing, and so forth (pp. 190-191).

On the other hand, Patton (2001) offers a clearly contrasting view by challenging what he sees as a classical unnecessary orthodoxy:

> My practical (and controversial) view is that one can learn to be a good interviewer or observer, and learn to make sense of the resulting data, without first engaging in deep epistemological reflection and philosophical study. Such reflection and study can be helpful to those so inclined, but it is not a prerequisite for fieldwork. Indeed, it can be a hindrance (p. 69).

During the 1980s and 1990s there was a fierce dichotomy between (post)positivist or empiricist and constructivist or interpretivist paradigms. The former is typically associated with quantitative methods, whilst the latter is typically associated with qualitative methods. Out of this two-sided paradigmatic battle, two other ways of viewing the world have emerged – the transformative and the pragmatic ones. Unlike the first two, these paradigms sanction the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Table 15, adapted from Guba and Lincoln (2005) and Creswell (2014), shows some of the most common labels attached to each of the paradigms:

(Post)positivist	Constructivist	Transformative	Pragmatic
Experimental	Ethnographic	Participatory	Pluralistic
Correlational	Naturalistic	Emancipatory	Problem-centred
Theory verification	Hermeneutic	Queer theory	Real-world
Quantitative	Theory generation	Freirean	Mixed methods
Normative	Qualitative	(Neo)Marxist	Participatory

Table 15 – Common Paradigm-related Labels

(Post)positivism represents the traditional form of research, thus being referred to as the paradigm of scientific research. It guided early educational research based on the assumption that the social world can be studied using the same framework applied to the natural world. (Post)positivism is grounded on the

empiricist view of an independent, objective reality that can be observed and measured with standardized scientific instruments. Knowledge is shaped by the evidence drawn from the numeric measure of those observations, thus allowing the researcher to test his/her theory and explain the situation of concern. (Post)positivism may be characterised as follows:

- Ontology – Single tangible reality. Reality is discovered within a certain level of probability (development from naïve or positivist to critical or post-positivist realism);
- Epistemology – Objectivity is especially important and, thus, the researcher's values, interests and feelings should not interfere with his/her considerations. Theories and knowledge can be tested and verified empirically;
- Axiology – Axiologically, positivists and post-positivists have a quite different stance. While the former deny the influence of the researcher's beliefs, i.e., believe that research can be value-free, the latter acknowledge that some sort of bias is inevitable, although undesirable, therefore impacting on the research process (observations, measures, and analysis of data). Researchers must, then, carefully check their interpretations for bias;
- Methodology – Uses primarily decontextualized quantitative methods. Researchers attempt to point out causal relationships of interest and/or relationships between variables, leading to verification or falsification of hypothesis.

It seems difficult to think of the classroom as an objective reality without being subject to contextual factors. Its dynamics can hardly, if at all, be analysed from generalisable numerical statistics alone. Furthermore, classroom research lends itself to discover bits of statistically non-significant information, but nevertheless important to the understanding of the problem. On its own breadth of data is not enough to gain full insight of the FL classroom.

Constructivism reflects the theory that reality is socially constructed. Accordingly, constructivist researchers try to understand the world around them as others experience it, more specifically those involved in the phenomena studied in

contexts that have not been meddled with to serve the researcher's interests. "The researcher's intent is to make sense of (or interpret) the meanings others have about the world. Rather than starting with a theory […], inquirers generate or inductively develop a theory or pattern of meaning" (Creswell, 2014, p. 8). Unlike (post)positivism, constructivism embraces the researchers' backgrounds (values, beliefs, religion, culture, personal and historical experience), recognising their influence on both the interpretation of data and the research product itself. In fact, they cannot be dissociated. Constructivism may be characterised as follows:

- Ontology – Multiple, socially constructed intangible realities, either individually or in group. Thus, there are multiple social constructions of meaning and knowledge. The same concepts may mean different things to different people. The researcher aims at understanding the social constructions that emerge during the study process;
- Epistemology – Meaning and knowledge are subjective, as they are individually or collectively mind dependent. Taking into consideration the constructivist emphasis on researching contexts of interaction in their natural state, researcher and research participants are closely connected, mutually influencing one another. Interpretation of the findings is value-bounded and shaped by the researcher's background;
- Axiology – Social inquiry is intrinsically value-laden. Although adhering to basic principles of ethics, the constructivist researcher is not neutral. So, values and potential biases are made explicit in the narrative. The researcher establishes a rapport with the research participants, enabling them to share their views;
- Methodology – Uses primarily contextualized qualitative methods. The research process is largely inductive; meaning is generated by the researcher from the evidence collected in the natural surroundings of the research participants. "[…] Efforts are made to obtain multiple perspectives that yield better interpretations of meanings (hermeneutics) that are compared and contrasted through a dialectical interchange […]" (Mertens, 2009, p. 19).

Classroom research is often associated with constructivism largely due to its qualitative methodology. Yet, if one can argue against the impossibility of (post)positivism's complete objectivity, the same holds true to constructivism's complete subjectivity. Some aspects of the classroom are clearly tangible, thus not being entirely dependent on the researcher's own frame of reference. In the same vein, inferences drawn from the data gathered cannot be completely universal nor can they be totally context-bound. Thus, on the other side of the scale of the quantitative-qualitative approach duality, depth of data alone does not suffice to get a broad overview of the research problem this study also aims for.

Transformativism arose from the assumption that neither (post)positivism nor constructivism addressed the existing social inequities of power, justice, oppression, and marginalisation. The transformative research is embedded in a worldview whose goal is to bring about social transformation by giving voice to minorities (e.g., race, gender and religion related). Transformativism is, then, a challenge to the prevalent theoretical paradigms usually developed by white male intellectuals with little or no vested interest in these specific social groups, perpetuating the dominance of the worldviews conveyed by such paradigms. The key role of the transformative researcher is to put the disenfranchised on the research agenda. Necessarily, by responding to transformative questions that may improve the research participants' lives and redress social imbalances, the researcher confronts parochial worldviews shaped by politicians and "hard" scientists. Indeed, one of the aims of transformative research is to capture the connection between social inequities and political action. Although no unified body of literature has yet been compiled, transformativism may be characterised as follows:

- Ontology – Multiple versions of reality grounded in social positioning. Reality is mutable, being contingent to historical, cultural, political, social, and power influences. Thus, privileged versions of reality must be put into perspective to unveil the oppressive deep ideological structures they are built on;
- Epistemology – Knowledge is an instrument used to legitimise the valued truth of marginalised people. Hopefully, from this knowledge,

individual and/or collective meaning is drawn to promote social action that empowers and transforms those without power or voice. With this rationale in mind, knowledge is defined within the researcher and research participants' prism, as they form a single, dissenting voice;

- Axiology – Well-founded ethics about the rights and welfare of the research participants is a basic premise of transformativism. In fact, researcher and research participants are thought of as equally important. Throughout the research process, they work collaboratively towards the same end result – revealing the life experiences of traditionally disenfranchised social groups. "Transformative researchers consciously and explicitly position themselves side by side with the less powerful" (Mertens, 2009, p. 21), which involves communicating the planned research agenda (transparency) and giving back to the people being studied (reciprocity);
- Methodology – Uses a pluralistic methodological approach, resorting both to quantitative and qualitative methods. In light of the transformative axiological assumption, research participants are usually involved in the research process – defining the problem, designing questions, analysing data and disseminating findings. The aim is to encourage participatory action based on shared experiential contexts to transform society's distorted truths and the research participants' lives.

Although recognising transformativism's contribution to challenge social inequities by giving voice to the partakers of the research, its ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological nature does not match the needs of classroom research.

Finally, pragmatism questions the assumptions of traditional paradigms (e.g., positivist) based on the view that truth can only be valid if scientifically tested and verified. For pragmatists, some truths can never be warranted and verified but may nonetheless be considered true. In the same vein, pragmatism rejects the notion that

scientific inquiry must be grounded in antecedent facts and/or evidence (e.g., post-positivism) but rather be judged by its problem-solving consequences. The pragmatic worldview appraises theories based on their utility to solve problems and help researchers succeed in dealing with significant difficulties throughout their inquiries. In accordance, pragmatism has a broad philosophical worldview thus denying one-sided allegiance to any given philosophical system or unified reality. Perhaps, this is why pragmatism has been frequently regarded as the underlying framework of reference for those aligned with the mixed-methods research approach. "Instead of focusing on methods, researchers emphasize the research problem and use all approaches available to understand the problem" (Creswell, 2014, p. 10). Pragmatism as a paradigm for social research is not new (early pragmatists can be traced to the late nineteenth century) but it was its eclecticism that bolstered its resurgence amongst the research community, despite some criticism about its theoretical body of thought. Although no unified body of core tenets is available, nor do pragmatists always offer concurring opinions, pragmatism may tentatively be characterised as follows, even though I do acknowledge that pragmatists avoid using metaphysical concepts as these are taken to flow directly from the paradigm's nature of inquiry:

- Ontology – Single reality interpreted individually. Each person has their own interpretation of reality because one's understanding of the world is limited to the interpretations of our experiences. These experiences are in turn restricted by the nature of the world. Within pragmatism, "ontological arguments about either the nature of the outside world or the world of our conceptions are just discussions about two sides of the same coin" (Morgan, 2014, p. 1048);
- Epistemology – Knowledge and meaning are to be found in the process of verification, i.e., they are created through lines of action during the process of inquiry. Their value is judged by their applicability to daily life problems. Knowing and doing cannot be separated, belief and action are bound together. Thus, knowledge is the result of taking action and experiencing the outcomes. Passive observation is vehemently rejected by pragmatists. The experimental theory of knowledge is fundamental to the researcher

if he/she wants to find out how things really are in the world. Even though pragmatists hold that knowledge is necessarily attached to context, observation imported from different contexts may be transferable and thus help finding alternative solutions to the researcher's current problem. Pragmatism relies on a process-based approach to derive knowledge, in which the process stems from the inquiry itself;

- Axiology – In pragmatists' eyes, axiology may be considered an expendable defining concept, taking into account that recognition of how personal values, beliefs and biases may affect the research process are intrinsic to pragmatic philosophy about the nature of inquiry. Pragmatists assign great importance to ethics, particularly the ethics of care regarding the youngest of society. The pragmatic ethical goal of research is "to gain knowledge in the pursuit of desired ends" (Morgan, 2007, p. 69);
- Methodology – Uses a pluralistic methodological approach, resorting both to quantitative and qualitative methods to match the questions and purposes of the research. The traditional "scientific notion that social science inquiry was able to access the "truth" about the real world solely by virtue of a single scientific method" (Mertens, 2009, p. 35) is dismissed by pragmatic methodological appropriateness on the account it is too narrow to respond to the *what*, *why* and *how* of most problematic situations. Different contexts and/or problems require choosing appropriate methods for specific inquiry needs. The focus is on practical decisions about how to combine the strengths and compensate the weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative methods to conduct the research. Methodologically, pragmatism argues in favour of a problem-solving, action-based approach to inquiry.

Bearing in mind the scope of this study, understanding how speaking and intelligibility are being approached in the Portuguese EFL setting, pragmatism allows the researcher to examine the FL classroom with a variety of complementary lenses, steering clear from the dichotomies offered by (post)positivism and

constructivism. The focus is on real-world problems and the practical use of the knowledge produced.

In light of these considerations, the complexity of the context targeted (classrooms), the research participants (pupils and teachers), the research purposes and my own set of beliefs about the nature of research, the paradigmatic stance adopted in this research is that of pragmatism. Besides practical reasons, pragmatism opens the door to different methodologies, data collection methods and analysis, thus offering an alternative view to compartmentalised research approaches. For instance, pragmatism captures the duality between the quantitative objectivity and qualitative subjectivity. The possibility of being either completely objective or subjective is hardly achievable for any researcher, even more experienced ones. Of interest for this study is also the dualism pointed out by Morgan (2007) between context-dependent and generalised knowledge, claiming that pragmatism "rejects the need to choose between a pair of extremes where research results are either completely specific to a particular context or an instance of some more generalized set of principles" (p. 72). Research results are never so context-dependent that they have no implications for other settings, nor are they so generalisable that may apply to every single setting. Instead, pragmatism advocates transferability[72], i.e., what can be done with the knowledge produced. Bearing in mind that my main goal is on making the acquired knowledge useful to all stakeholders, I am interested in making the most appropriate use of that knowledge in different settings.

In view of the selected paradigm, the core of the research methodology is qualitatively driven, involving multiple sources of information. Yet it is supplemented by a quantitative method to extend its reach, to improve its validity and to provide fuller answers to the research questions. Grounded in this methodology, data collection methods include questionnaires, classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and audio recordings. Rich, focused, and detailed data is to be collected. Also, to allow an in-depth analysis of the target groups and the context they operate in, the study uses inductive reasoning

[72] Guba and Lincoln (1989) employ the term in a twofold fashion: a) as the qualitative parallel to external validity and b) as the concept that allows the readers of the research to decide if the research context may apply to their own.

embedded in a case study approach. However, deductive reasoning is not ruled out from the analysis. The anticipation of the study's conclusions vis-à-vis the research questions hinted at chapters I and II is but a reflection of its usage. Indeed, inductive reasoning serves as input to deductive reasoning, and vice-versa. From a pragmatist point of view, it seems virtually impossible, not to say undesirable, to move only in one direction of the available sets of data. Being cognisant that research projects hardly ever follow linear paths, the decisions and steps taken for this study are depicted in figure 17.

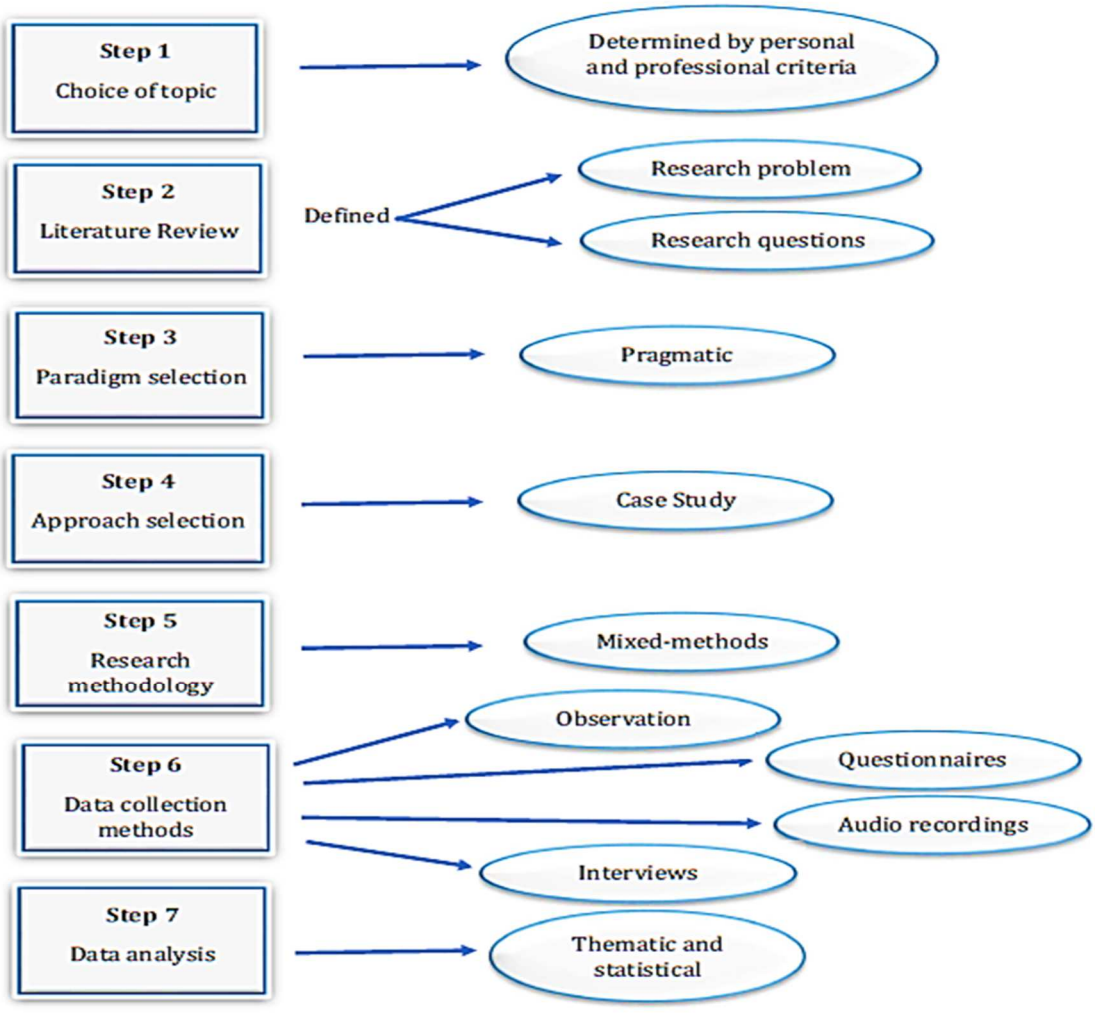

Figure 17 – Research's Course of Action

III. 3 – Methodological Underpinning

The pluralism of my paradigmatic stance, anchored in the assumption that the purpose of the research (research questions) is above methodological disputes, endorses the use of different strategies of inquiry. So, to answer my questions I use a mixed methods research approach, thus avoiding a rather clear-cut dichotomy found throughout literature between qualitative and quantitative research. Indeed, in my opinion qualitative and quantitative methodologies should not be considered mutually exclusive, mixing both offers added value to most research contexts.

Instead of representing any of the ends of the research continuum, a mixed methods approach moves back and forth the continuum to comply with the research's needs. Perhaps, due to the relative novelty of this approach several other labels can be found to address it, integrating, multimethod, mixed methodology, and the like, but recently the term mixed methods tends to prevail. In a nutshell, mixed methods research

> is an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks. The core assumption of this form of inquiry is that the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone (Creswell, 2014, p. 4).

Accordingly, it involves collecting, analysing, and merging open-ended (qualitative) and closed-ended (quantitative) data.

Mixed methods as a methodological framework originated around the 1980s, but discussions on the possibility of gathering data from different methods can be traced to Campbell and Fiske (1959), who promoted multitrait-multimethod research in the field of psychology. Although their conceptualisation was based on quantitative data, it marks the beginning of multiple forms of data collection to study the same phenomenon. It has emerged for the past 30 years as a valid alternative to the qualitative-quantitative dichotomy, being considered the third methodological movement after undergoing several developmental phases (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Mixed methods research has grown in sophistication and popularity in

diverse fields, especially educational and psychological. For instance, Newman, Ridenour, Newman, and DeMarco (2003) assert the need to use mixed methods for their potential to address multiple purposes and the complexities of the research questions. Yet, despite the widening acceptance of mixed methods as a distinct methodological alignment, it is not without criticism. Greene and Caracelli (2003) claim that many mixed methods researchers are unsatisfactorily reflective because they do not attend to philosophical assumptions, thus failing to judiciously evaluate their practice decisions in accordance with their paradigmatic stance. Greene and Caracelli's point is particularly relevant taking into account the importance of pragmatism's philosophical tenets for mixed methods research.

The continued emergence of mixed methods research had its breakthrough when the concept of triangulation was introduced into social sciences. Originally, triangulation refers to the application of trigonometry to naval navigation and land surveying for determining an unknown position based on two other bearings, thus forming the triangle from which one can locate himself. The term was, then, borrowed into social sciences to convey the idea that multiple sources of data were needed in a single study to better understand the phenomenon being studied and improve the credibility of the researcher's inferences. Triangulation became synonymous with combining different data sources to take advantage of each method's strengths while reducing their weaknesses. Today, the concept of triangulation is widely practised and addressed throughout discussions of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research (e.g., Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*). Indeed, the growing significance attributed to triangulation is reflected by its inclusion as a criterion to judge the quality of any given research (cf. Mertens (2009)). However, Bogdan and Biklen (2007) argue against triangulation because "it confuses more than it clarifies, intimidates more than enlightens". They advise to "describe what you did rather than using the imprecise and abstract term triangulation" (p. 116). Although recognising Bogdan and Biklen's arguments, for the purposes of this study I continue to believe that triangulation is a valuable tool for a fuller understanding of speaking and intelligibility in the Portuguese EFL classroom and above all to help verify facts otherwise more difficult to validate. In his seminal monograph *The Research Act* Denzin (1978) identifies and distinguishes four types of triangulation:

1. Data triangulation – use of a variety of data sources;
2. Investigator triangulation – use of different researchers;
3. Theory triangulation – use of multiple perspectives to interpret the same data;
4. Methodological triangulation – use of multiple methods to study the selected phenomenon.

Of these, two types of triangulation may be found in this thesis, data, and methodological triangulation (space triangulation is subsumed in data triangulation) to maximise the validity of the results.

The aftermath of the paradigms debate was marked by calls for multiple methods methodologies, which translated in the rise of mixed methods research. A period of dialogue between mixed methods and qualitative and quantitative researchers began. Some examples are provided by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009): "MM responses to those advocating "scientifically based research," which stresses the QUAN orientation, [and] MM responses to criticisms from QUALs' statements that mixed method designs are direct descendants of classical experimentalism" (p. 72). Meanwhile, several seminal works on mixed methods research as a methodology on its own right were published, thereby establishing it as the third methodological field available for researchers. Influential Mixed methods works may be found on both sides of the Atlantic, including among others Creswell (1994) (2014), Patton (2002) and Greene (2007) for the USA and Hammersley (1995), Erzberger and Kelle (2003), Niglas (2004) and Bergman (2008) for the UK and continental Europe. Another indicator of mixed methods' rise is the increasing number of studies which resorted to this methodology throughout the Human Sciences, ranging from Health to Education or even Management. Focusing on the Educational field, Niglas (2004), in her research design classification (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods) from 15 education journals, found that almost 20% of the empirical studies had a mixed methods design. In fact, since the beginning of the twenty-first century, mixed methods research started to be steadily used in educational doctoral thesis such as mine (e.g., Stevens's (2001) study to examine and describe the changes in middle schools as the result of external agent assistance).

Mixed methods research seems to appeal to many researchers. In addition to the philosophical assumptions that underly my paradigmatic stance, the rationale to conduct mixed methods research in this study has three main reasons. On the whole, mixed methods is chosen because of the potential it offers to achieve a fuller understanding of how speaking and intelligibility are being addressed in Portugal's L2 classrooms (research question number one), by drawing on qualitative and quantitative strengths whilst minimising their limitations and the danger of one-sided representation and, thus, better legitimising my findings than would qualitative or quantitative methods on their own. Mixed methods are also chosen for practical reasons, the context where the research will take place. The EFL classroom has unique features that need to be looked at from different angles. A mixed methods approach will help me draw stronger conclusions about the problem under study. This recognition has been echoed by other classroom researchers, such as Dörnyei (2007) who claims "that the understanding of the operation of complex environments - such as classrooms - lends itself to mixed methods research, because combining several research strategies can broaden the scope of the investigation and enrich the researcher's ability to draw conclusions (p. 186). I strive to comprehend, document and analyse the teaching/learning classroom dynamics of speaking and its intelligibility subset, not only to know how they are being addressed but also if they are truly a neglected party in the Portuguese EFL classroom (research question number two) and if so, how should learners be expected/required to develop their ability to speak and pronounce the language (research question number three). I believe that uncovering these complexities with qualitative engagement alone, typical of classroom research, may fall short of the desired outcome. My final reason for choosing a mixed methods approach is based on procedure. Using both strategies of inquiry allows for: a) a comparison between the different perspectives drawn from qualitative data (e.g., interviews) and quantitative data (e.g., survey questionnaires), b) an explanation of qualitative results backed up by quantitative data and vice versa, and c) an opportunity for potentially divergent views manifested in two different sets of data. It must be emphasised that I do not see the possibility of having different opinions as an inconsistency, quite the opposite. Indeed, one of the advantages of mixed methods is providing information that otherwise would not be uncovered if only qualitative

or quantitative data collection instruments were to be used. A subsidiary reason for my mixed methods choice is grounded not in the research questions per se but in my purpose to promote a wider debate about speaking and intelligibility amongst ELT practitioners and applied linguists in Europe and other parts of the world, asserted in the introduction. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods may reach diverse audiences. Hopefully, scholars working primarily at any of the ends of the research continuum (methodological purists) will connect with the inferences drawn from this study, which is dominantly qualitative but is supported by a quantitative component. "This is not simply a case of validation through triangulation […] but rather generating an overall level of trustworthiness for the researcher" (Dörnyei Z. , 2007, p. 166). It can be said that my study has its point of entry at the B zone of Teddlie and Tashakkori's Qualitative – Mixed Methods – Quantitative continuum (figure 18).

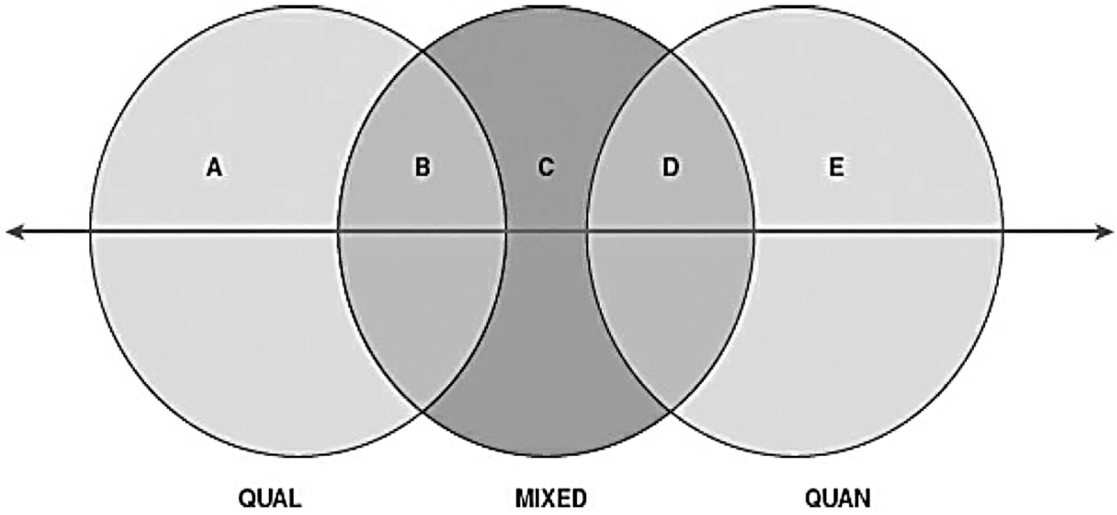

Figure 18 – The Qualitative – Mixed Methods – Quantitative Continuum

Zone A – Totally QUAL research; Zone B – Primarily QUAL research with QUAN components; Zone C – Totally integrated Mixed research; Zone D – Primarily QUAN research with QUAL components; Zone E – Totally QUAN research.

Mixed methods research offers a number of possibilities to combine qualitative and quantitative methods. Such design taxonomies are defined by the ordering of their application throughout the study. Accordingly, research designs may be parallel (Creswell (2014) applies the term concurrent in place of parallel) – the two strands occur simultaneously or with some time lapse without influencing

the operationalisation phase of each other and the data gathered is integrated during the analysis stage, or sequential – the two strands occur in chronological order, one being dependent on the other and one type of data providing the basis for the other. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) further expand mixed methods designs to include:

- *Conversion mixed designs*—In these parallel designs, mixing occurs when one type of data is transformed and analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively; this design answers related aspects of the same questions;
- *Multilevel mixed designs*—In these parallel or sequential designs, mixing occurs across multiple levels of analysis, as QUAN and QUAL data from these different levels are analysed and integrated to answer aspects of the same question or related questions;
- *Fully integrated mixed designs*—In these designs, mixing occurs in an interactive manner at all stages of the study. At each stage, one approach affects the formulation of the other, and multiple types of implementation processes occur (p. 136).

The design adopted for this thesis is that of parallel mixed design. Following the notation for mixed methods research design (see table 16[73]), this study is notationally represented as QUAL + quan, reflecting the weight assigned to the contribution of each of the data collection methods. I use a case study approach (observation, interviews, and audio recordings) supplemented by a survey questionnaire. The uppercase QUAL letters indicate the dominance of qualitative methods, whereas the lowercase quan letters indicate the lesser emphasis assigned to quantitative methods. The plus sign indicates my parallel research design.

[73] The notation depicted in table 16 is based on Janice Morse (2003, p. 198), who developed the basic notational system which continues to be used in mixed methods research.

Notation	Indication
Plus sign	Projects are conducted simultaneously.
Arrow	Projects are conducted sequentially.
QUAL, QUAN	Greater emphasis assigned to the method.
qual, quan	Lesser emphasis assigned to the method.
QUAL + qual	Qualitatively driven, qualitative simultaneous design.
QUAN + quan	Quantitatively driven, quantitative simultaneous design.
QUAL + quan	Qualitatively driven and quantitative simultaneous design.
QUAN + qual	Quantitatively driven and qualitative simultaneous design.
QUAL→qual	Qualitatively driven project, followed by a second qualitative project.
QUAN→quan	Quantitatively driven project, followed by a second quantitative project.
QUAL→quan	Qualitatively driven project, followed by a quantitative project.
QUAL→qual	Quantitatively driven project, followed by a qualitative project.

Table 16 – Mixed Methods Research Design Notation

The implementation process of my QUAL + quan research design has implications at three intertwined levels – data collection, data analysis and interpretation. The data collection instruments, as alluded above, include observations, interviews and audio recordings for qualitative data and a survey questionnaire for quantitative data. Although different in nature and sample size both forms of data collection use the same concepts, i.e., speaking and intelligibility. For instance, I will be measuring quantitively how speaking and intelligibility are being addressed in the classroom and simultaneously asking the same underlying question during the interviews. A parallel design implies using the same concepts or constructs. The issue of sample size is not considered a problem for the purposes of this study because one of my intents is to combine micro and macro perspectives of the phenomenon and compare results between the two databases. My intent directly influences the way in which data is analysed, a process that can be rather challenging because this is the stage when the collected data is integrated into one another. There are three possibilities to merge qualitative and quantitative data: side-by-side comparison, data transformation or a joint display. Here I analyse data through a side-by-side comparison of the two databases by reporting the

quantitative findings, then the qualitative findings and finally comparing within a discussion if they converge or instead display divergent results, which is a point made above for my choice of mixed methods research. Notwithstanding the fact that more emphasis is given to the qualitative findings, neither database is meant to build on another but to be brought together to form conclusions. As it happens, "inferences based on the results from each strand are integrated to form meta-inferences at the end of the study" (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 136). Meta-inferences are overarching conclusions drawn from the merge of parallel qualitative and quantitative inferences obtained during the course of the data analysis stage. This means that data analysis is closely followed by interpretation, since the latter is made on the basis of the findings of the former. In other words, interpretation is the process of making sense of the results of data analysis. Given the parallel mixed design nature of this study, the interpretation discussion (done in chapter IV) accounts for: a) the possible reasons for the convergence or especially the divergence[74], if any, between the two strands of information, and b) the answers to the research questions in the form of meta-inferences in an attempt to construct a more comprehensive understanding of speaking and intelligibility in the Portuguese EFL classroom.

Briefly, my parallel mixed research design (graphically illustrated in figure 19) develops in the following fashion:

- QUAL and quan research strands are planned in accordance with the research questions and the studied phenomenon;
- QUAL and quan data collection is implemented, developing in a parallel but independent manner;
- QUAL and quan data are analysed independently. Each analysis generates inferences;
- QUAL and quan data are merged and compared side-by-side to verify if they display convergence or divergence;
- Inferences are integrated and interpreted as a whole to form meta-inferences about the research questions.

[74] Typically, the comparison does not yield the exact same results, some differences may occur. Divergence is here taken as the occurrence of completely different or even contradictory results between qualitative and quantitative databases.

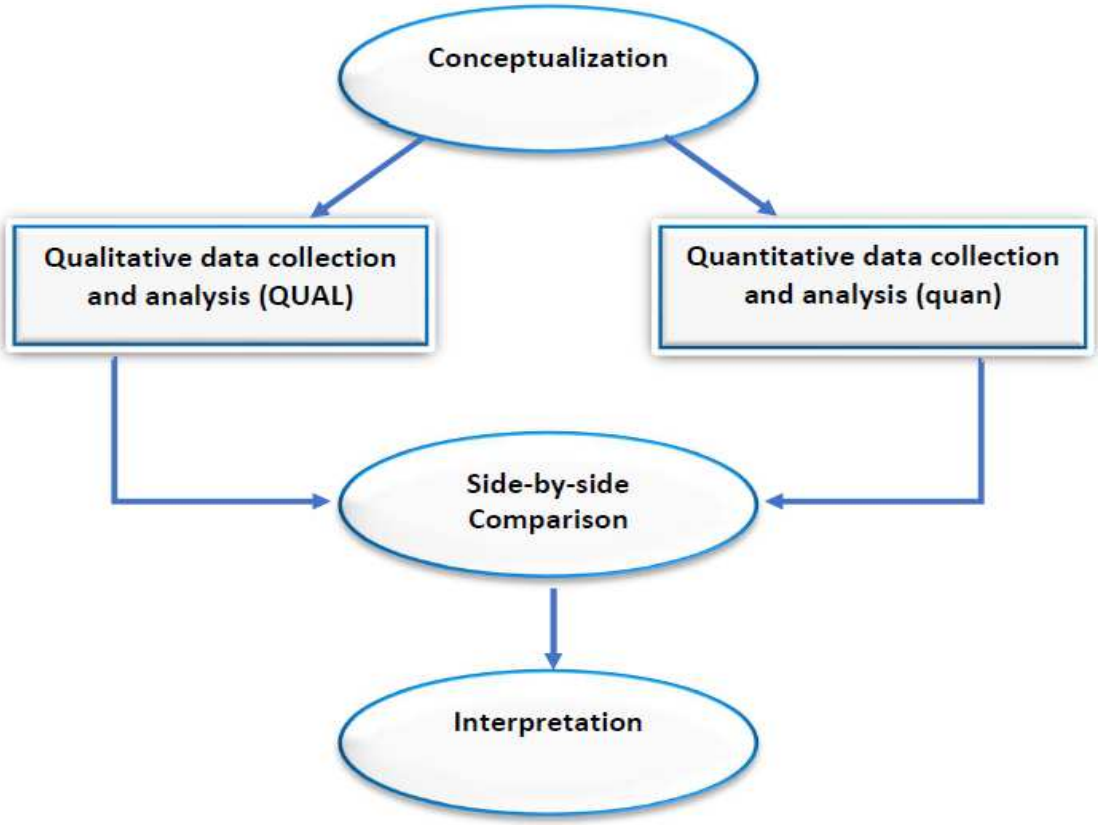

Figure 19 – Study's Parallel Mixed Research Design

A final caveat must be made regarding parallel mixed research designs. Despite its powerful appeal, rooted in the possibility of combining qualitative and quantitative strengths to unveil the intricacies of complex contexts such as classrooms, and wide use throughout the Human Sciences, it poses a few challenges for researchers, especially novice ones like myself. It is difficult and time-consuming to collect data from two different sources. It is even more difficult and laborious to analyse the data collected in a parallel fashion, and then merge it together to draw (meta)inferences. It requires for the researcher to have some knowledge of qualitative and quantitative research procedures. This issue is raised by Hesse-Biber (Hesse-Biber, 2017), who questions how well-versed a researcher can be in both qualitative and quantitative skills. Last but not least, it may cause additional problems if salient divergencies difficult to interpret occur, thus making meta-inferences harder to be drawn.

III. 4 – Data Collection Instruments

Collecting data is one of several fundamental steps of research. Thus, the decision on which data collection instruments are best suited to serve the interests of our research questions is no trivial matter; moreover, when the classroom is the research's main site. Studying how the teaching and learning of speaking, in particular pronunciation (intelligibility), takes place in context is rather complex. Despite being aware that the data collection instruments chosen for this study are used in other settings, the uniqueness of the EFL classroom has a strong bearing on my choice and for that matter in the way I conducted my study in it.

The instruments chosen to develop the study are questionnaires, interviews, observation, and audio recordings, falling under the scope of the mixed methods data collection strategies. Questionnaires represent the quantitative strand whilst interviews, observation and audio recordings represent the qualitative strand. Yet it must be said that the same methods may belong to either of the strands depending on the researcher's needs or development of the research itself. Taking questionnaires as an example, if they are designed with closed-ended items they generate quantitative data, but if they are designed with open-ended items, they generate qualitative data. Indeed, data itself may be converted, a process described by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) as *quantitizing* (when qualitative data are converted into numbers) or *qualitizing* (when quantitative data are converted into narratives). Besides taking advantage of each method strengths while compensating for limitations, data gathered using this combination of quantitative and qualitative methods allows for methodological triangulation. In this vein, the description that follows offers an overview of the selected data collection methods by considering their nature, rationale for their use and comparing advantages and disadvantages. Detailed information about their structure and implementation is provided at section 6 (Research Procedure) of this chapter.

Questionnaires are common in peoples' lives, since they are often cited on the news as the basis for a variety of topics discussed, be it politics, economics, or personal well-being. Among ELT educational researchers, questionnaires have grown in popularity and use too because they are fairly easy to create, exceptionally versatile and very efficient in quickly gathering a large amount of information. It is

the possibility for breadth offered by questionnaires that dictated my choice to use them. If not included, the research questions, especially number one and number two, would be underrepresented and the range of the study too narrow to account for a wider understanding of the research problem. However, in spite of such wide use, Dörnyei (2007) cautions us to the fact that "there does not seem to be sufficient awareness in the profession about the theory of questionnaire design and processing; the usual perception is that anybody with a bit of common sense and good word processing software can construct a fine questionnaire" (p. 102). But this is not true. The information we want to learn about the phenomenon under study will only be made available if elicited by the right questions.

Traditionally, questionnaires involved paper-and-pencil, but, thanks to technology, nowadays they are web-based, which makes them far easier to administer, edit and tailor, as well as eliminate the cost handicap. Notwithstanding, web-based questionnaires raise a different concern – overly quick responses to significant questions for the study as people move from screen to screen, thus potentially jeopardizing the validity of the answers. This is one of my practical concerns, taking into account that my questionnaire is web-based (Google forms), but is a risk I am willing to take to avoid the underrepresentation of data alluded above. Perhaps, this problem may be mitigated by paying attention to questionnaire's length. Short questionnaires will probably prevent people from rushing through them. Typically, questionnaires are made of closed-ended items to facilitate the collection of large samples of data in a ready-to-process form. The questionnaire applied to frame the research problem follows this rationale, while not being subject to any kind of *qualitizing*. In general, questionnaires yield three types of data about the respondents: 1) background characterisation (age, gender, residency, level of education and the like), which corresponds to factual questions; 2) behaviour (actions, lifestyles, and habits), which corresponds to behavioural questions; and 3) attitudes (opinions, interests, values, and beliefs), which corresponds to attitudinal questions. While doing type 1 questions, in order to answer my research questions, my questionnaire focuses on types 2 and 3. I want to ascertain what Portuguese EFL teachers are doing in the classroom in terms of oral skills and what they think about speaking in general and intelligibility in particular. These three broad types of questions (closed-ended) are usually answered in four

formats: Likert scales, semantic differentials, checklists, and rank order. Briefly, Likert scales measure the respondent's level of agreement or disagreement with the given statement; semantic differentials measures the respondent's opinion by asking to rate it (with a tick or an "X") between two bipolar extremes; checklists measure the respondent's opinion about the concept of the study by allowing to check all categories deemed appropriate; rank order scales measure the respondent's priority or importance attributed to characteristics or objects according to his/her preferences. Other not so common closed-ended response formats include true-false-items and multiple-choice items. For educational settings Likert scales are the most applied format. Yet, to suit the study's aims, my questionnaire is made predominantly of checklists and multiple-choice items, as these are also familiar to the respondents, do not force either-or responses and focus the respondents on the concepts I want to address, speaking and intelligibility, thus providing a richer set of data to draw from to answer the research questions. Furthermore, these types of questions are considered more likely to garner a higher response rate.

Questionnaires are clearly a valuable tool for research. They are efficient psychometric procedures to collect large amounts of data without involving too much time, effort, and financial cost to administer. In addition, they can be used across a variety of people and topics (versatility) and offer anonymity, which more often than not is decisive to get honest answers. Nevertheless, there are also well-known problems with questionnaires. As I see it, the biggest problem lies on their self-report nature, thus obscuring the truth in the responses. I am not implying that people intentionally lie when answering a questionnaire but may distort their answers if they feel their answers will make them look bad, due to their desire to meet expectation. Thus, the respondent may underreport the true answer whilst overreporting a perceived desirable attitude and/or behaviour. Concentrating on my own research questions, let us imagine that a given respondent claims to practice speaking and pronunciation regularly when in fact most of his classes are devoted to grammar explanations and drills. It is the perceived importance attributed to speaking that holds back the honest answer. This is the reason why questionnaires should be complemented with other data collection instruments, as is the case here with interviews and classroom observations. The questionnaire alone could give a

false account of how speaking and intelligibility are being addressed in Portugal's L2 classrooms, if at all. Further limitations concern wording, i.e., how far do respondents accurately understand the question and how far does the question influence the answer, and mood of the respondent, who might not give careful feedback. This is particular salient with teachers, the cohort targeted by my questionnaire, whose tight schedules and busy professional lives may unduly influence the responses given and thus convey potential untrustworthy information.

Interviews have been widely used for anthropological and sociological purposes but are relatively new as a classroom research tool. Nowadays they are considered an indispensable source of data for this setting because they can provide significant insight about the affairs and actions that take place inside it. Like questionnaires, interviews are also a frequent part of our social life, every day we watch people being interviewed on television. Perhaps, as claimed by Dörnyei (2007), "it is exactly because interviewing is a known communication routine that the method works so well as a versatile research instrument" (p. 134).

Qualitative interviews are the most common partner of questionnaires in mixed methods research. Interviews can either supplement questionnaires and/or complement them. Here, interviews serve a supplementary role since they cover the same aspects as the questionnaire (teaching practices on speaking and pronunciation and attitudes towards intelligibility), allowing the side-by-side comparison mentioned earlier. In this study, interviews are at a midpoint interval, halfway between questionnaires and classroom observations. Although they share the self-reported nature of questionnaires, they can be matched against the observations made to check for possible discrepancies between the teachers' perceived and actual pedagogic practices. From here, these inferences are matched against the answers given in the questionnaires, thus providing more reliable meta-inferences about the research questions. So, with the interviews I try to enter the interviewees (teachers) perspective (ideas, thoughts, and opinions), and gather meaningful data about the phenomenon studied on their own words rather than my own.

Broadly speaking, interviews have three main types: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Other equivalent terminologies may be found

throughout literature (for instance, Patton (2002, p. 342)). Structured interviews lie at one end of the structure degree extremes. This type of interview involves a pre-determined set of questions to be covered closely in the same order and wording by the interviewer. Structured interviews do not allow the interviewee to deviate from a well-defined domain. It can be argued that this alternative elicits roughly the same kind of information as a questionnaire. At the other end of the poles, unstructured interviews allow maximum flexibility, which is not surprising if we take into account that it stems from ethnography. With this type of interview nothing is pre-determined, questions emerge from the natural flow of the context as the interviewee tells his/her story. In fact, it may resemble a conversation between interviewer and interviewee that requires active listening from the former and spontaneity from the latter. Within the centre of the continuum fall semi-structured interviews, which "rely on a certain set of questions and try to guide the conversation to remain, more loosely, on those questions. However, semi-structured interviews also allow individual participants some latitude and freedom to talk about what is of interest or importance to them" (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 113). In other words, the interviewer pursues a particular thought-in-advance topic (the structured part of the word) but gives himself and the interviewee enough leeway to elaborate on important issues based on the natural development of the interview (the semi part of the word). This type of interview is issue-oriented, allowing the researcher to obtain privileged information from the interviewee on the focused phenomenon. Bearing in mind that I have a well-defined domain to investigate but do not want to limit the depth and breadth of my interviewees' responses by providing them with sets of fixed answers, for the present study I resort to semi-structured interviews. From my standpoint, this is the most fitting format to probe the "hows", "whys" and eventually the "don'ts" of speaking and intelligibility in the Portuguese EFL classroom without constraining data with my own points of view. The purpose of the interview and its underlying topics are known by the teachers, but I keep myself at a safeguard distance not to influence the answers given nor the validity of the interpretations made for the research questions based on those answers. This is a countermeasure to avoid the bias worry alluded below.

Depth and breadth are the added value yielded by interviews, especially semi-structured ones, to (classroom) research. They are especially useful to unravel

the how and why behind self-reported questionnaires and even observed actions. "Interviews […] provide opportunities to instantiate and enlighten our theories […] as well as to inform theory and practice by giving us first-person accounts of the contexts that we study" (Turner & Meyer, 2000, p. 77). However, they are not without their pitfalls. From a practical point of view, interviews are time-consuming, both in design and implementation, and require above average communicative skills. The interviewer must be able to build a rapport with the interviewee while keeping his/her neutrality and subtly guiding the interview to the subject area. Other problems must be taken into account too. Of these, bias is probably the most troublesome, either on part of the interviewer or the interviewee or both, thus resulting in potentially unwanted biased data. Interviews also share with questionnaires their perceived desirability weakness. Interviewees may answer what the interviewer wants to hear in order to please or to convey a better than real image of themselves in an attempt to meet perceived expectations. Within this study, this problem is easily sidestepped since it relies on classroom observations as well to spot divergences, if any, among all sets of evidence collected. A final issue in interviewing relevant for language teacher research is raised by McDonough and McDonough (2014), that of role relationship between interviewer-interviewee. This relationship (either symmetrical or asymmetrical) has "implications for the formulation of questions as well as for their content, and will require a good deal of linguistic sensitivity and adaptability by the researcher" (p. 185).

Observation is another common qualitative data collection instrument, particularly suited to record interactions occurring in defined social situations, such as classrooms. Indeed, the background of this discussion on observation is classroom-based, which does not lend itself to be a full ethnographic account since it focuses on specific phenomena (e.g., speaking and intelligibility). On these grounds, Polio (2009) labels this type of classroom observation research "nonethnographic, nonexperimental research" (p. 67). Observation has a unique trait that sets it apart from self-reported instruments based on questioning like the ones described above – questionnaires and interviews, they provide a direct source of information, allowing to capture the phenomenon under study first-hand. Again, I reiterate the value of embedding different data collection instruments in the larger-scale research design to make the most of each one's strengths. (Classroom)

observation may be organized in several different ways, yet two dimensions of observational research repeatedly surface throughout literature (e.g., (Turner & Meyer, 2000), (Dörnyei Z. , 2007), (Mertens, 2009) (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) and (McDonough & McDonough, 2014)) for their impact on the observation's outcome: the observer's role dimension and the degree of structure dimension. The observer's role may range from complete observer to observer as participant, participant as observer and complete participant. Hesse-Biber (2017) describes each of these roles in the following fashion:

- Complete observer – […] Requires that the researcher's identity remain hidden; the researcher does not interact with those in the setting but instead makes observations of the setting by using such devices as a hidden video camera […] Allows the researcher to study a setting without interfering with its day-to-day operations, thereby minimizing the bias (or *reactivity*) that might result from the presence of the researcher interacting and possibly changing the very nature of social relationships in the setting. It is possible that those in the setting will change their behaviour if they know a researcher is present;
- Observer as participant – […] Requires the researcher to reveal his or her researcher identity in the setting, but the extent to which the researcher actively engages with the members of the setting is *limited*;
- Participant as observer – […] Participates fully in the ongoing activities of the research setting, and members of the setting know the identity of the researcher;
- Complete Participant – […] Actively engages with members of the setting. […] The researcher takes on the role of complete participant in order to "pass" as an authentic member of that setting (pp. 193-195).

My own degree of participation in the setting moves back and forth the continuum between complete observer and observer as participant, starting with the latter and then moving back as much as possible to the former. The line between these two roles is not finite. Students and teachers know my identity and the purpose of my stay, but I do not interfere with the natural development of the lesson thus

attempting to avoid reflexivity, otherwise my research question number two (Are speaking and intelligibility truly a neglected party in the Portuguese EFL classroom?) runs the risk of being irretrievably misrepresented.

The observation's degree of structure can range from formal to casual. More commonly the structured–unstructured dichotomy is offered. Yet, in the same vein of the observer´s role, there is no finite line between the two. Indeed, this is a fluid continuum which usually takes the observer to use some combination of both. The structured, more systematic protocol of classroom observation involves having a specific focus and some previously established observation categories. Systematizing can be achieved by using observation schemes, whose main methods of recording include time and events. If the observer opts for time, the selected category is recorded on a fixed time interval (usually every 30 or 60 seconds). If the observer opts for events, the selected category is recorded by entering a tally mark every time it occurs throughout the lesson. On the other hand, the unstructured, more naturalistic protocol of classroom observation may at first simply involve writing down field notes on blank sheets of paper, since the observer is not sure about which events may be significant for the research. In time, these notes progress to a running narrative description of what happens inside the classroom with its usual partakers in their natural state. So "[…] context becomes crucial, because it sites the phenomenon of study in space and time, and can therefore tap into the constantly fluctuating interactions and relationship patterns in a group of people working together"[75] (McDonough & McDonough, 2014, p. 114). Finding myself moving back and forth the structured–unstructured continuum, for this study I follow a combination of structured and unstructured classroom observation. I use an adapted version of the Communication Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995) observation scheme, whose limitations to capture some of speaking's features (e.g., paralinguistics) are supplemented by descriptive linguistics field notes. The choice for an observation scheme lies on its usefulness to

[75] This notion of context speaking for itself falls under the scope of van Lier's (1988) emic world. The emic or participant's standpoint comes from within the system. Its opposite is the etic or researcher's standpoint, which comes from outside the system. The two are alternate, but not incompatible, ways of observing the same reality.

spot patterns and significant events from the data and interpretation of what has been observed.

The main merit of observation is its first-hand account of the classroom's events in real time, allowing the researcher to compare what he actually observes with what the participants self-report. On the negative side, the main drawback of observation lies in its potential effect on the participants – the famous observer's paradox/effect. Like any other researcher, I face the dilemma between wanting to observe the natural flow of the lesson and the possibility that participants may change their behaviour because of my presence to fit the pattern they think I may be looking for.

Audio recordings were saved for last for their twofold nature. They serve the primary purpose of capturing speaking and intelligibility patterns (in the narrow sense discussed above) during spoken interactions between students and the secondary purpose of backing up interviews and observations.

Audio recordings provide a window for classroom talk. They are another method to explore how speaking and intelligibility are being addressed in Portugal's L2 classrooms (research question number one) and confirm if speaking and intelligibility are truly a neglected party in the Portuguese EFL classroom (research question number two). These recordings of spontaneous speech in the classroom allow non-real-time later analysis to find my focus. First for coding COLT's Part B, which "[…] analyses the communicative features of verbal exchanges between teachers and students and/or students and students as they occur within each episode or activity" (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995, p. 13), and second for settling down to review it in more detail to look for the specific features I am interested in. This review is accompanied by the descriptive linguistics field notes referred to above taken at the time of the recordings in order to obtain as complete a picture as possible of the Portuguese EFL classroom's oral proficiency. Using audio recordings and descriptive linguistics field notes in this fashion falls under the scope of what McDonough and McDonough (2014) call an elaborative description. Put simply, the same is to say that putting different sources of data together represents a way of enhancing the quality of the inferences drawn. If necessary, the audio recordings of spoken production and/or interaction may also be useful to verify COLT's Part A

coding, which focuses on the events (episodes and activities) taking place in the classroom and is done in real-time while the researcher is on-site.

Audio recordings further supplement interviews and observations. In the spirit of sociolinguistic classroom discourse analysis, where the relationship between language and its future use in society is paramount, audio recordings provide several details otherwise conceivably lost during real-time interview and observation procedures. Indeed, the increasing interest in studying classroom linguistic processes has made recordings a common practice amongst educational researchers. For this study, the interest lies in the way that students produce extensive chunks of spoken language and subsequently in identifying phonological features as they unfold over the course of the interaction(s). Recordings are usually transcribed and used at the analysis and/or interpretation stages in the form of short illustrative extracts to corroborate whatever point the researcher is trying to make at the time. This is one of the advantages of recordings, their in-depth examples of teacher-students and students-students' interactions. Furthermore, recordings also provide support to the researcher's field work (interviews and observations), freeing him/her from the constraints of data reductionist accusations. On the other hand, recordings also raise some theoretical issues. The most inconvenient is tied to loss of nonverbal information – facial expressions, gestures, eye movements, and the like. Another pitfall of recordings concerns the need to do transcriptions. Transcribing spoken language is time consuming and labour intensive, even if only partial transcriptions of important segments of speech are prepared. Two caveats have to be made: a) this is not to say that transcriptions are not an important procedural step, and b) if needs be, transcriptions are open to later expansion.

This section described the data collection instruments used for this study, discussing their inherent characteristics and the rationale for their use and pointing out their strengths and weaknesses. As acknowledged by Turner and Meyer (2000):

> Only by collecting data over time, both in breadth and depth, will we garner the most powerful descriptions to support our explanations of context. Only by looking across time will we come to realize the basic

principles under which a particular context operates as well as those aspects of the interactions that are idiosyncratic or ephemeral (p. 81).

Taking into account the complexity of the phenomenon studied and the research questions that underlie it, table 17 provides an overview of each data collection instrument by considering purpose, advantages, and disadvantages. This is a means of cross-checking their complementarity, as none is without limitations.

Instrument	Main Purpose	Advantages	Disadvantages
Questionnaires	To gather information from teachers in different locations on a large scale.	- Are easy to administer, edit and tailor; - Are inexpensive; - Offer anonymity; - Are good for measuring attitudes.	- May obscure truth due to their self-report nature; - May convey potential unreliable information.
Interviews	To gather teachers' in-depth explanations and personal views.	- Yield depth and breadth by giving first-person accounts; - Shed light on the how and why behind self-reports.	- Are time-consuming; - Require good communication skills; - May provide unwanted biased answers (perceived desirability).
Observations	To focus first-hand on specific details of speaking and intelligibility.	- Offer a direct source of data; - Free the researcher from relying on what the participants say they do; - May be used deductively or inductively.	- Can be difficult to interpret; - May have a negative effect on the participants (observer's paradox/effect).
Audio Recordings	To capture and illustrate speaking and intelligibility patterns.	- Offer real and in-depth examples of spoken language; - Allow non-real-time later analysis - Support the researcher's field work.	- May lead to loss of nonverbal information; - Are time-consuming and labour intensive.

Table 17 – Data Collection Instruments' Overview

III. 5 – Participants and Context: The Case Study Tradition

Case study research is commonly found in the academic fields of anthropology and sociology, but has progressively been adopted by practising professions too, such as teaching. Indeed, McDonough and McDonough (2014) expressed their belief that case studies operating at the micro level, even though they can occur at the macro level too, are "most appropriate for teacher-generated research" (p. 203). In a similar vein, Nunan (1992) submits that case studies are particularly suitable "[…] to help practitioners enhance their understanding of, and solve problems related to, their own professional workplace" (p. 89). Towards the end of the twentieth century, case study research grew in acceptance partly on its own merits but also due to the reflective practitioner perspective, a professional capable of critically reflecting upon his/her practices and thus improving them as the result. In line with this view, within the scope of the thesis the concern lies in the understanding of FL educational action, by shedding empirical light on how oral proficiency is being approached in the EFL classroom. The assertions made do not imply any kind of critical judgment. The adoption of a case study for this study was determined not only for the thorough interpretation of classroom events it allows but also because it may encourage greater interest amongst teachers and researchers alike. As teacher-researcher myself, I know that both ends of the spectrum do not always go hand in hand.

Case study research has been extensively dealt with throughout literature (Stake, 1995) (Tellis, 1997) (Bassey, 1999) (Stoynoff, 2004) (Duff, 2008) (Yin, 2018), so it comes as no surprise that its definitions, characteristics, taxonomies and the like are both varied but also overlapping. Some of the most significant repeated principles are in-depth study, (real-world)context, singularity, multiple perspectives, triangulation, generalisation(s) and interpretation. Considering, the object of interest I wish to understand, i.e., my *case*, it is Yin (2018), perhaps the leading exponent in case study research, who offers the most compelling definition of case study which he addresses as being

an empirical method that

- investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when

- the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident (p. 50).

The essence of the case study is, then, its real-life context bound nature. A clear-cut line cannot be drawn between the people that make-up the *case* and their natural surroundings, otherwise the case study's full potential to inform is not reached. One of the strengths of case study research is its ability to appreciate contextual circumstances. In fact, it is difficult to imagine studying the approach to oral proficiency in the classroom meaningfully, set apart from the context where it naturally occurs. Only in the classroom can one have a true picture of how speaking and intelligibility are being addressed in Portugal's L2 classrooms (research question number one) and, on the other hand, if speaking and intelligibility are truly a neglected party in the Portuguese EFL classroom (research question number two). In complex sites such as classrooms the relevance of context cannot be overlooked. As it happens, one of the two main reasons for my choice for a case study is the blurriness of boundaries between context and phenomenon being studied. The other, is its appropriateness to answer the "hows", and the potentially the "whys" (if research question number two is confirmed), of my research questions. Not decisive, but nonetheless pertinent for my choice is the potential of case study research to fill in a gap long claimed by several scholars in the field of applied linguistics. Stoynoff (2004) declares it is "regrettable that classroom teachers have been underrepresented, and largely precluded from participating in much of the published research on second language learning and teaching" (p. 381), whilst Moussu and Llurda (2008) have this to say:

> The shortage of studies using a classroom-observation method points to an urgent need for more studies into NNS teachers' classroom performance, as we need to know more about their use of teacher talk, grammar explanations, promotion of varied interactional patterns, use of the textbook, and all the many specific NNS 'characteristics' that have been mentioned in the literature (p. 337).

Case study research does not always offer formal designs, yet I find them fitting to build a stronger case by refuting the haphazardness criticism. Thus, figure 20 illustrates my case study design.

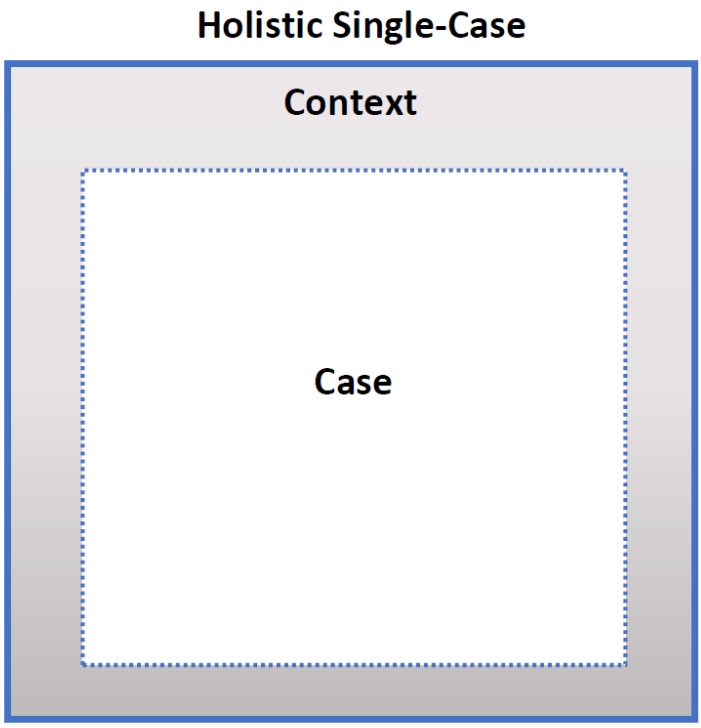

Figure 20 – Study's Single-Case (Holistic) Design

It is a holistic (single unit of analysis) single-case, as opposed to single-case with embedded units or multiple-cases (see Yin (2018) for a thorough discussion about each of them). The dotted lines signal the claims made above about the blurriness between context and case. The rationale for a holistic single-case is twofold. This design was chosen: first, because of its longitudinal nature – a detailed examination of the unit of analysis was made at regular intervals (weekly) over the course of a school year; and second, for its potential representativeness and contribution to understand Portuguese EFL classrooms vis-à-vis speaking and its intelligibility subset, bearing in mind that, while diverse, the context in which EFL is delivered in Portuguese classrooms is broadly homogenous. Nonetheless, issues of generalisability may arise. In fact, generalisability seems to be one of the most controversial topics around case study research's added value. Duff (2008) offers an extensive summary (chapter 2) of arguments for and against the significance of generalisability in case study research. Thus, it would be redundant and beyond the scope of this study to discuss generalisability in-depth. However, to lessen the possibility of criticism on the grounds of generalisability and to further complement

my design choices, it is germane to say that the type of case study selected is an instrumental one, as characterised by its author:

> I use the term *instrumental case study* if a particular case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization. The case is of secondary interest, it plays a supporting role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else. The case is still looked at in depth, its contexts scrutinized, and its ordinary activities detailed, but all because this helps us pursue the external interest. The case may be seen as typical of other cases or not. […] Here the choice of case is made to advance understanding of that other interest (Stake, 2005, p. 445).

In other words, the *case* provides insights into oral proficiency in the classroom while allowing to answer the research questions. The focus is on the issue of speaking and intelligibility, the *case* was selected to illustrate it. As regards generalisability two more related comments must be made. Considering my pragmatic stance, I reiterate what was said in section III.2.: a) research results are never so context-dependent that they have no implications for other settings; and b) what matters the most is what can be done with the knowledge produced, i.e., transferability. Indeed, I am not interested in abstract arguments of either possible-impossible extremes to generalise, but in making appropriate use of the information gathered instead.

Following the choice of type, another principled decision had to be made, that of sampling. Sampling strategies have been categorised in many different ways, but most of them fall under the broad category of purposive/purposeful sampling. More often than not, sampling strategies are also grouped throughout literature according to their characteristics. For instance, Richards (2003)draws a distinction between process-related strategies (Snowball, Opportunistic, Convenience) and case-informed strategies (typical, extreme, maximum variation). The former describes strategies that guide the researcher by what happens in the field (process), whilst the latter describe strategies determined in advance by their relevance to the phenomenon under study (case). Other distinctions are offered based on different concerns (e.g., feasibility and saturation (Dörnyei Z. , 2007)). Bearing in mind the rationale offered thus far, the sampling strategy selected was typical. The

participants (teachers and students) serve as illustrations of what may be considered typical in the Portuguese EFL classrooms in what concerns the approach to oral proficiency, i.e., the findings are likely to reflect what is normal. The goal is to identify and understand key aspects of the dimension of interest as they manifest under ordinary circumstances. Again, issues of generalisability arise from the purported inability to generalise findings drawn from typical samples. Despite having stated my views on generalisability above, it is fitting to bring an additional process to the fore, that of analytic generalisation. It is Yin (2018) who puts forward analytic generalisation, defining it as follows:

> An analytic generalization consists of a carefully posed theoretical statement, theory, or theoretical proposition. The generalization can take the form of a lesson learned, working hypothesis, or other principle that is believed to be applicable to other situations (not just other "like cases"). Thus, the preferred analytic generalization is posed at a conceptual level higher than that of the specific case (presumably, your interest in this higher level justified the importance of studying the chosen case in the first place) (Tutorial 2.1).

The flaw in the discussion about the likelihood of generalising from case studies lies in considering statistical generalisation as the only way to do so, without contemplating a possible comparison between results and theory as opposed to populations. Although I move along the transferability continuum, working back and forth between the inferences drawn from the *case* and their more general implications, and thus rejecting to fall on either side of the possibility-impossibility generalisability scale, it seems to me that the discussion around generalisability is partially skewed. The assumption that findings are generalisable only if they accord with the parameters of quantitative research is misplaced. Studying a classroom will always have, at least in some way, a wider resonance, contributing to a better understanding of other classrooms.

Case selection and design are among the most central decisions to be made in case study research. In a like manner, contextualisation is also paramount for a better understanding of the setting and participants who provide information about the topic being studied. Thus, the account that follows is my attempt to detail the

ecology upon which the *case* was conducted. For the sake of anonymity, as part of my ethical compromise with those involved, no names will be mentioned throughout the remainder of this chapter and the next. Instead, when necessary, the three initial letters of the alphabet will be used to designate the three classes and two teachers involved in the study. As it happens, case study research lends itself to discover "[…] things about people they didn't know themselves and might not want others to know. It can hurt; a lot; and for a long time. This means that no researcher should ever duck ethical issues" (Richards K. , 2003, p. 139).

The public school to which I gained entry to is located in a small southern town of Portugal. It is part and parcel of a school cluster made of several different schools ranging from nursery school to upper-secondary school (roughly 1600 students). The school caters for students with diverse socio-economic backgrounds, reflecting the social composite of the town itself. The population comprises nationals and immigrants whose schooling, employment and income differ greatly. Students' parents may be illiterate (a small percentage though) or may have university degrees; may be unemployed or be lawyers/ teachers; may be living on social security benefits or making four times as much the minimum wage. Yet inside school premises all students are offered the same working conditions. By and large, this broad description might be considered typical of any given Portuguese public school.

Narrowing down the scope, it is in due course to detail the three classes I was allowed to observe. Class A comprised 21 students in total, 13 boys and 8 girls. 19 of them are Portuguese, 1 is Chinese and another is Romanian. Both the Chinese and Romanian students have been in Portugal since early age, having done all their schooling in the country. The average age was 14. No student had misbehaviour problems, 5 were described as talkative. As far as English is concerned, only one student had failed the subject in the previous year, whilst 4 of the students claimed that English is their favourite subject. All students had had English for five school years, started at the 5th grade. Class B comprised 22 students in total, 5 boys and 17 girls. 21 of them are Portuguese and 1 is English. The English student has been in Portugal since early age, having started her schooling in the country (primary school). The average age was 14. No student had misbehaviour problems. As far as

English is concerned, no student had failed the subject in the previous year, whilst 6 of the students claimed that English is their favourite subject. Apart from the odd exception (English pupil), all students had had English for five school years, started at the 5th grade. Class C comprised 19 students in total, 7 boys and 12 girls. 16 of them are Portuguese, 1 is Chinese, 1 is Cape-Verdean and another is South African. The South African student has been in Portugal for several years, but he has not done all his schooling in the country. The Chinese student came to Portugal in 2016, whilst the Cape-Verdean student came to Portugal in 2019. The average age was in-between 14 and 15. 1 student had misbehaviour problems, 2 were described as talkative and one as easily distracted. 4 students are reported to have failed one or more school years throughout their schooling. As far as English is concerned, only one student had failed the subject in the previous year, whereas another claimed that English was his favourite subject. The majority of students (15) had had English for five school years, started at the 5th grade[76].

Last but not least, the description of teachers A and B/C, respectively the teachers of classes A and B and C. Both teachers have extensive English teaching experience, 20 years or more, including 9th grade. Teacher A is a long-time member of the school's staff. She holds an undergraduate teaching degree in Languages (English and German) from a Portuguese University. In addition, she has enrolled in numerous continuous professional development (CPD) courses. Unlike teacher A, teacher B/C is not a member of the school's staff but has been teaching there for the past three years. She also holds an undergraduate teaching degree in Languages (English and Portuguese) from a Portuguese University. Moreover, besides the numerous CPD courses she has enrolled in, teacher B/C has both a master's degree and a PhD in literature. Considering the pedagogic nature of the teacher-student relationship in the classroom, it must be stressed that teachers A and B/C had a strong rapport with their students anchored in clear explanations, timely feedback, positive encouragement, and constant monitoring for prospective difficulties.

[76] This information was requested to each of the classes form teacher at the beginning of the school year (September 2019) and later sent to me via e-mail in October. The composition of the classes did not change throughout the school year, only a few absences as the result of student illness.

A final cross-sectional observation is necessary. As stated earlier, the context in which EFL is delivered in Portuguese classrooms, while with some minor differences, is broadly homogenous:

- three weekly hours are allotted to English lessons, either divided by three, an hour each day, as is the case in this school[77], or more commonly by two, one hour on any given day and two consecutive hours on another;
- Classes are made of 24 up to 28 students, unless they include students with special needs;
- The textbook is pivotal. It dictates most of the activities, as well as the flow of the lesson;
- teachers are (proficient) non-native speakers;
- teachers are expected to follow national curricular guidelines (subject's core curriculum and targets), which rely heavily on the CEFR's (2001) guidelines and proficiency descriptors;
- students share and speak the same first language (Portuguese);
- English is the students' first FL;
- speaking is the skill students dread the most;
- English is not used continuously outside the classroom.

The effect of context on the dynamics of classroom behaviour is, then, a substantial matter if we are to ascertain some of the factors impinging on the *case* and its participants.

III. 6 – Research Procedure

First and foremost, the complex process of gaining entry had to be tackled. This is a process that cannot be underestimated because, more often than not, it may require considerable negotiation and compromise with a gatekeeper. The challenge

[77] The timetable arrangement at this school has got a relevant nuance for the scope of the study. Together with Portuguese, one of the hours assigned to English is a split class lesson. While half of the students is having a Portuguese lesson, the other half is having an English lesson. This particular lesson is meant to improve the students' speaking and writing skills. To my knowledge, no other school has adopted this teaching strategy.

of negotiating access to the research context is not to be taken lightly, it is the element which all the rest depends upon. Without it there is no *case*. With no case the empirical research would be undermined.

Being a teacher myself lent me an insider status. I am familiar with the site and the school board. Nevertheless, the project had to be detailed to the headmistress and the potential benefits for all the participants highlighted. In truth, it was the reciprocity factor that eased my way in. My entry was subsequently confirmed in the form of a written informed consent (see appendix D[78]), signed by the headmistress. At this point I gained entry to the site but was still outside the classroom. Thus, the second step taken was reaching out to teachers. Again, after identifying all 9th grade teachers, access was carefully negotiated. Allowing the presence of a stranger inside one's classroom is challenging. So, I started by building trust on the basis of ensuring complete confidentiality and anonymity. Next, the purpose of the research was explained. It must be said that the dilemma on how much information was enough arose. I sought to provide an honest but general enough explanation, without resorting to deception, so as not to cause biased teaching patterns. Besides purpose, the procedure was also negotiated because it involved a weekly presence and audio recordings. Ultimately, out of the available pool of 9th grade English teachers, two gave me their written informed consent (see appendix E) to observe their lessons and grant me an interview at the end of the school year. Keeping in mind that the classroom is made of teachers but also students, although the former had consented my entry, one final step was to obtain the parents' written informed consent (see appendix F[79]). Hence, I started by going to each of the classes and explained the study's aim and procedure to the students, then the same was done with both the classes' form teachers and the students' parents. To all the three parties, issues concerning risks, benefits, participation, and confidentiality were vehemently highlighted. Additionally, an email was provided to the students' parents for further questions, if any. The gaining entry procedure took

[78] The appendix is kept in its original Portuguese version. Complying with my anonymity compromise as well as the Portuguese data protection law, the name of the school cluster was deleted.
[79] The appendix is kept in its original Portuguese version. Complying with my anonymity compromise as well as the Portuguese data protection law, the email of the researcher was deleted.

almost a full month. Only after these legal and ethical research steps were taken and finished did I start my fieldwork.

Observations started on the 30th of September and were due to finish in May, a week before the school year's end. Unlike what I anticipated; observations came to an unexpected halt at the end of the 2nd term (March). The government decreed full lockdown on the country, schools included, by reason of the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, if truth be told, by then the data collected was becoming redundant, i.e., if not there already I was close to achieve data saturation. Of course, I could have always found something new if I had stayed longer, but at that point shades of new patterns were becoming thinner and thinner.

During the period of my stay, I observed each class weekly, one lesson per week. The system used has a twofold nature bearing in mind the goals of study and its research questions, a category system and descriptive system. The former is an observation scheme adapted from Spada and Fröhlich (1995) original COLT – Part A, thus named COLT PT – Part A (see appendix G). The original COLT has over 30 categories, which encompass 48 category columns. COLT PT was slenderised to serve the purposes of the study. For instance, within the broad category of content, the management category was completely discarded, because I was not interested in issues such as discipline, and the other topics category was reduced to two columns (to point out the language's range of reference – narrow or broad). It is also worth mentioning that the sociolinguistics column (language category) was replaced for interculturality, not only because it reflects a more up to date term but most important because it could link with the concept of intelligibility and its importance for mutual understanding between people from different linguistic backgrounds. In the same vein, a further procedural nuance was adopted. Instead of coding observations at time intervals I did it on the grounds of events. For present purposes, I found it more appropriate to answer my research questions. I aimed at coding events as they occurred, not at predetermined intervals, to have a clearer gist of how speaking and intelligibility are being addressed in Portugal's L2 classrooms (research question number one) and if speaking and intelligibility are truly a neglected party in the Portuguese EFL classroom (research question number two), and not risking fragmenting data. The low-inference side of the scale part of COLT is

further complemented by its Part B counterpart. Part B includes high-inference categories to be coded post-observation period, which analyse student-teacher and student-student interaction. Here too, modifications were implemented to COLT's original scheme to fit the study's goals COLT PT – Part B (see appendix H). The distinction between giving (predictable or unpredictable) and requesting (pseudo or genuine) information by the teacher or student was narrowed down to predictable or unpredictable, regardless if it is given or requested, as they overlap. In a similar fashion, the broad category incorporation of student utterances by the teacher was reduced in two dimensions. More often than not, in L2 classrooms repetition and paraphrase are used to hint correction, thus the two were discarded. The terminology comment was replaced for feedback. Feedback is considered to be more comprehensive. Thinking on the nature of feedback, this category was discarded from the broad category incorporation of student/teacher utterances by the student. Moreover, the categories correction, paraphrase and repetition became subsumed under a new category – repair. This category is related to the teacher's correction and or feedback. Its coding signals the learner-user's repair in spoken interaction, either with the teacher or a peer. Taking into account the underlying concept of the research, the intelligible dimension was added to the scheme under the speech category. The intelligible speech category was coded with a √ or a X depending on the learner-user's (un)intelligibility.

Altogether, the COLT-based scheme permitted to code broader categories related to classroom instruction, but also focused characteristics of the studied phenomenon. The descriptive system that accompanied COLT had the form of descriptive linguistics field notes. Besides the scheme I always took two blank sheets of paper (not always written in full) to each lesson, allowing abundant space to make several entries about the events taking place inside the classroom. The descriptions made served to capture important communicative features (e.g., kinesics) for successful spoken interaction otherwise lost throughout.

Audio recordings were used in an attempt to supplement observations and interviews. So, they started and ended almost at the same time of observations. I chose to start recording on the second week of my stay to give both teachers and students a little time to adjust to my presence first and after to the recorder. Indeed,

when the recorder was brought in the classroom and put on the table for the first time (second observation lesson) there was a sense of curiosity but also unease and awkwardness. Months later, the students told me they were afraid of my presence because they thought I was there to evaluate them.

The selected equipment for the recordings, taking into account the setting and budget and recording constraints, was a Tascam DR-05X digital audio recorder with stereo omnidirectional built-in microphones. The equipment was bought in early September to allow enough time to get acquainted with the machine's features and how they operated. It must be stressed that I was not allowed to use more than one recorder and that I sat at the end of the classrooms so as to disturb as little as possible. The recorder always stood on a small tripod on the table. Exceptionally, on three occasions, always with class B (split class lesson) while doing group work in small groups, teacher B/C gave me her permission to stand up choose a group and sit closer to the students. I chose a different group every time and tried to capture further nuances of the learner-user's interactions, but it did not work out as I wanted to. Only one group continued speaking while I was sitting next to them listening, watching and recording, the other two simply became silent. So, on each of these times I got back to my seat and resumed my usual procedure. Henceforth, the standard procedure was never altered. The digital audio recorder was equally utilised at the end of school year (July) to record the interviews of teachers A and B/C.

The interviews were conducted in late July. The initial intention was to do it at the beginning of June, a week or two after the observations have finished, depending on the teachers' availability and my own. But again, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews had to be postponed. The timing was not perfect (close to holidays) but was the possible timing under the circumstances. A further procedural issue concerns location. For the same reason, the interviews did not take place at school, as originally planned, but online instead. Interviewer and interviewee each at home, but the face-to-face nature of the interview was not lost. The preparation of the interview itself started with the conception of a guide (also protocol). An interview guide helps the interviewer not to leave out questions by accident and offers a template to be reviewed, ensuring that the topic(s) is/are properly covered.

A list of twelve questions was put together. All of which derived from the study's research questions. Next, a pilot interview was conducted (early July) with a fellow non-participant English teacher. Anticipating the possibility of an online interview, I chose to pilot it in a like manner. The piloting led to some fine-tuning of wording and question order and the addition of one further final question (see appendix I). Bearing in mind the dynamics of interviewing, apart from the odd exception (highly structured interviews), unscripted questions were also used to react to the teachers' answers.

The quantitative strand of the research hinged on a questionnaire, approved by the Portuguese Education Directorate-General (see appendix J). Running the risk of repeating myself, the questionnaire too was not applied as planned by reason of the COVID-19 pandemic. The planned time frame was May (1st-16th). Usually, during these two weeks teachers are not so busy with assessment, in particular written tests. Thus, the probability of having more teachers replying to my questions would increase. When things are hectic questionnaires are the least of the teachers' worries. However, despite being an online questionnaire, the Portuguese Education Directorate-General did not authorize its launch. In effect, I was told that the questionnaire was only sanctioned after the beginning of the next school year, 2020-2021. So, the questionnaire's launch happened in late October. The rationale for this timing is the same as the above for the original time frame.

A list of twenty-two questions for the questionnaire (see appendix K) was put together (the preliminary item pool was twenty-nine), twenty-one of which were compulsory, whilst one was optional, depending on the teacher's previous answer. In a similar fashion to the interviews, all the questions derived from the study's research questions. The questionnaire was then divided into two sections, a generic one with six questions concerning issues of location, schooling, type of affiliation, age, gender, and teaching recruitment group, and a focused one with sixteen questions directing full attention to speaking and intelligibility. The optional question was included in this section. The questionnaire encompassed closed-ended checklists, multiple-choice items and two true-false items. The questionnaire was preceded by a brief introduction (see appendix K) stating to whom was it for, its purpose and where would the data collected be discussed and accompanied by a

written informed consent (see appendix L) and an informative note (see appendix M). To extend the questionnaire's reach, a web-based platform was used – Google forms. It was sent to 811 Portuguese public schools across mainland Portugal and the islands of Madeira and Azores. Following Dörnyei's advice on the importance of piloting data collection instruments (2007), prior to its launch, the questionnaire was piloted twice (all through July). The first piloting phase involved two fellow non-participant English teachers. The goal was to check for confusing, inappropriate, or redundant questions and/or omission of relevant questions for the scope of the study. The remarks concerned excessive length, wording (ambiguity) and question order. So, the preliminary item pool was trimmed down, the questions were rearranged, and the wording suffered some fine-tuning to become clearer. The second, and final, piloting phase involved a group of fourteen fellow non-participant English teachers. Of course, a bigger group would have been better to provide more insight, but I resorted to all the 9th grade teachers I could think of. With this near-final version, the main focus was on possible signs that the questions were not understood properly. At this stage, no comments were made, the questionnaire seemed satisfactory enough and did not have any obvious glitches. In view of the reasons alluded above, the questionnaire was stored and released in late October.

The procedural contingencies pointed out along this section, although undesirable, have been, nevertheless, the faithful experience of this study and the researcher.

III. 7 – Closing Remarks

Chapter III marked the move to the empirical study itself, standing for its methodological underpinning – research paradigm, methodology, data collection instruments, participants and context and procedures adopted.

Whether we are aware of it or not, our views and beliefs about how we perceive and frame the problem impinge on the choices to conduct the research. This view is not unanimous amongst researchers, but as far as this study goes my assumptions have clearly influenced the decisions made throughout. Thus, the chapter started with a discussion about the most relevant research paradigms. The

qualitative-quantitative rivalry has its roots in the (post)positivist and constructivist paradigms and the way they saw the world. Out of these two extremes, in a quest to challenge the assumptions of traditional paradigms and address social inequities emerged pragmatism and transformativism. In light of the rationale presented, the pragmatic paradigm was appointed to govern the study.

Anchored in the nominated paradigm, the chapter went on to detail the methodology employed, that of mixed methods, highlighting the reasons for its selection. Mixed methods research methodology has been progressively considered the third methodological movement, as it does not tip to either qualitative-quantitative side of the scale. A more comprehensive interpretation of the research problem is, then, potentially achieved. Therefore, although the core of the research methodology is qualitatively driven, it is supplemented by a quantitative method. The study's methodology is represented as QUAL + quan, reflecting the weight assigned to the contribution of each of the data collection methods. Accordingly, the chapter moved on to review the data collection instruments used to explore speaking and intelligibility in the classroom, questionnaires, classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and audio recordings, discussing their inherent characteristics, the foundation for their use and pointing out their strengths and weaknesses.

The chapter developed with a thorough description of the case study tradition, as well as the participants involved and the context they operate in, taking into consideration the pedagogic centeredness heart of the study. Issues of context and generalisability were put into perspective from an instrumentality point of view. If the former's significance for case study research goes without dispute, the latter remains one of the most heated topics around it.

Finally, the chapter covered the adopted procedures to tackle the research questions that shape this study. The steps and decisions taken, the justifications for the choices made and the practical implementation and limitations of the data collection instruments were here debated. Their inherent contingencies were equally acknowledged as part of the unpredictability that characterises research. Grounded in these methodological foundations, the next chapter attempts to give an

account of the complex nature of real Portuguese language learning classrooms with real learners and real teachers.

IV– Data Analysis and Discussion: Approaching Oral Proficiency in the EFL Classroom

IV. 1 – Opening Remarks

This final chapter reports the evidence collected from the qualitative and quantitative methods that inform and underlie the research procedure conducted to attempt to answer the central questions of the study:

- How are speaking and intelligibility being addressed in Portugal's L2 classrooms?
- Are speaking and intelligibility truly a neglected party in the Portuguese EFL classroom?
- If so, "How should learners be expected/required to develop their ability to [speak and] pronounce a language?" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 153)

The heart of the empirical research is here addressed and discussed in a parallel but independent fashion, in compliance with the available data for each of the qualitative and quantitative strands. It is useful to emphasise that the analysis of the data gathered during the period of time of my stay at the school I gained access to is related and connected across the different instruments used. These are put to work in unison towards the same goal. In fact, "analysis depends on identifying key features and relationships in the data" (Richards K. , 2003, p. 273). The focus throughout the chapter is the classroom and its main players – teachers and pupils. The two parties, either wittingly or unwittingly, are the focal points of the classroom. Like a maestro conducting an orchestra, teachers should guide their classes and orchestrate group processes to facilitate language acquisition and enhance speaking proficiency embedded in intelligibility. For their part, following the lead of the teacher, pupils should actively seize every opportunity to develop their oral proficiency while becoming progressively more intelligible.

By addressing the first research question I try to gain insight into how speaking proficiency is being approached, as well as chart the unfolding of intelligibility in the classroom. This is my attempt to understand which strategies, if

any, are being supplied to students to cope with the difficulties posed by speaking in general (e.g., memory, anxiety, distractions, attention, and speech errors) and reduced intelligibility in particular (e.g., non-standard phonological features in the speech signal), either as speaker or listener. By addressing the second and third research questions I try to establish the extent to which the premise hinted at the first chapter that speaking and intelligibility are still ignored by many a teacher throughout Portugal's L2 classrooms is supported by the evidence of my findings. If so, I want to explore and better understand how teachers feel about this state of affairs.

In a nutshell, this chapter presents the findings of the study, hopefully contributing for a better understanding of how effectively speaking and intelligibility are being approached in the Portuguese EFL setting. The organisation of the analysis moves forward through a side-by-side comparison of databases in an attempt to shed pragmatic light on the study's central questions. This discussion hints at the pedagogical implications of the study's findings for both teachers and students involved in L2 teaching and learning.

Reiterating my recursive text organisation, this chapter unfolds the particular – the EFL classroom and its key actors. It functions as a window to the real world of English teaching and learning in Portugal by providing empirical evidence about the subject.

IV. 2 – The Quantitative Strand: Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed through a web-based platform (Google forms) to extend its reach. As alluded in the research's procedure, it was sent to 811 Portuguese public schools across mainland Portugal and the islands of Madeira and Azores. All the schools' headmasters played an important role by acting as liaison between the researcher and the prospective respondents. They forwarded the email sent with a short introductory message explaining the purpose of the study and the respective link to the questionnaire. Although the questionnaire did not have the advantage of being group administered, nor was it the intention, the response rate was reasonably high – N=420 respondents.

The first section of the questionnaire aimed at gathering background information about the respondents. Figure 21 summarises this data by frequency and percentage[80] for each of the six questions which comprise it, thus offering an outline of the total sample of teachers involved in the questionnaire. Although this segment plays a subsidiary role to the inferences to be drawn, there are some figures worth looking at because, if cross tabulated with those of section two, they may further help to shed light on the research questions.

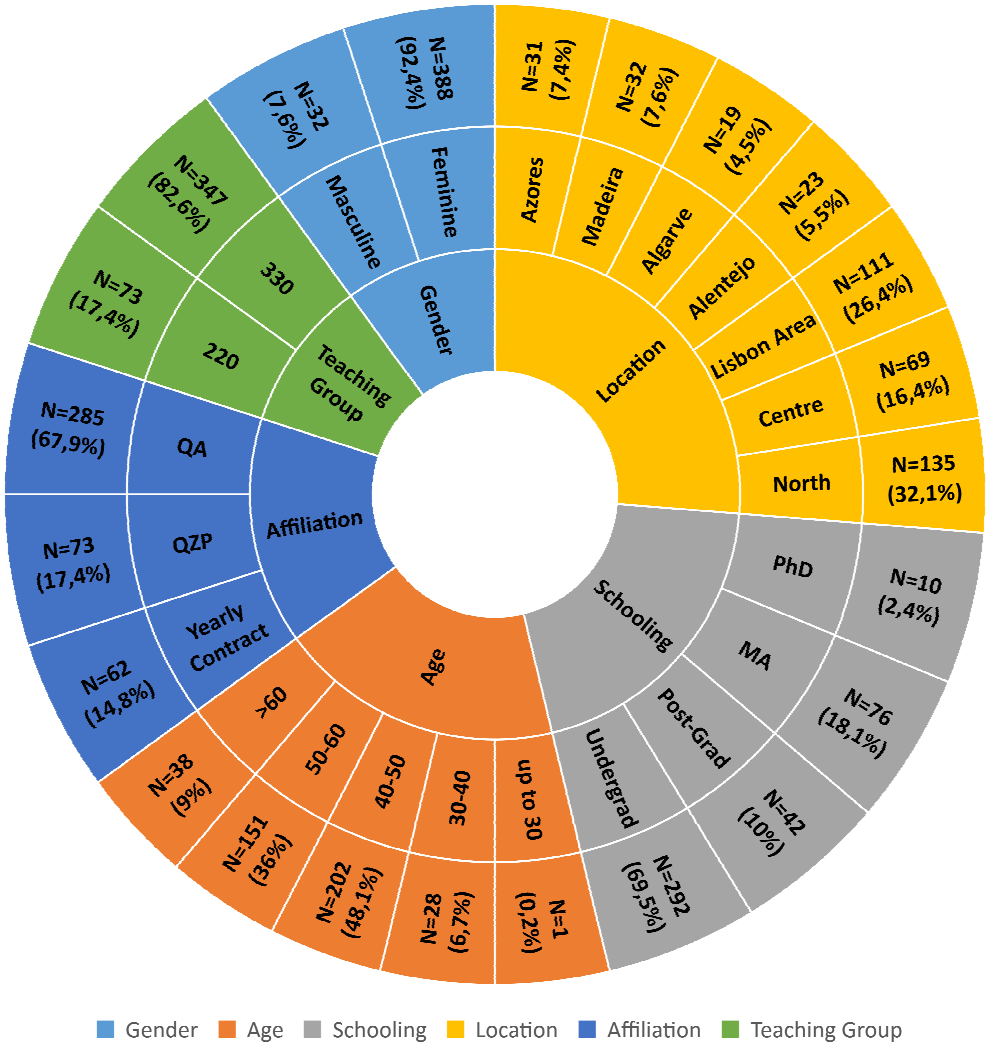

Figure 21 – Teachers' Background Data by Frequency and Percentage

A staggering 92,4% (N=388) of respondents are women, while male teachers represent only 7,6% (N=32) of the running total. Almost half of the teachers are in their mid-forties, 48,1% (N=202), making it the mode for this question, followed by teachers in their mid-fifties, 36% (N=151). Only 6,7% of the teachers (N=28) are in

[80] Tally results for frequency and percentage stem from pivot tables using spreadsheet software.

their mid-thirties and just one teacher is under thirty years old. As regards educational level, most teachers, 69,5% (N=292), are undergraduates (there is no reference if it is a teaching degree or not[81]). Only 2,4% (N=10) claim to have PhDs. It must be stressed that the total account for MAs displayed in figure 21 can be subdivided in pre-Bologna, 11,7% (N=49), and post-Bologna, 6,4% (N=27). Unsurprisingly, taking into account the population density, most of the respondents are located in the North of Portugal 32,1% (N=135) and the Lisbon area 26,4% (N=111). Considering the age variable of the respondents, it comes as no surprise that most of them are permanent staff (*Quadro de Agrupamento / Escola – QA/QE*) of the schools they work in – 67,9% (N=285). Next in line, are the teachers whose affiliation is to district areas, not particular schools (*Quadro de Zona Pedagógica – QZP*). These teachers represent 17,4% (N=73) of the total account. Finally, the smallest group of respondents, 14,8% (N=62), amount to those who do not have a stable affiliation with the Ministry of Education (*Docente contratado/a*), having to apply each year to any available position across district areas and/or country. The last item of the six concerned teaching recruitment group. The vast majority of teachers belong to the 330-teaching recruitment group, 82,6% (N=347), whilst the rest of the teachers belong to the 220-teaching recruitment group, 17,4% (N=73). By and large, most respondents are undergraduate, permanent staff women teachers in their mid-fifties, 20,71% (N=87)[82].

The second section of the questionnaire concerned the teachers' teaching practice, which corresponds to their attitudes and behaviour (attitudinal questions). The first three items of this section – Are you familiar with the new CEFR (2018)?; If so, are you familiar with its phonology descriptors?; How familiar are you with intelligibility? – laid stress on intelligibility. An even half of respondents (N=210) said that they are not familiar with the new CEFR. The concerns voiced in section II. 5.4. about the Council of Europe's behindhand action seem to be confirmed by the number of teachers who are not familiar with the new CEFR – CV and thus with the

[81] Not so long ago, undergraduates with no teaching qualifications, for English or any other subject, could apply for a teaching position. The situation was altered in 2006. Hereafter, teaching degrees were compulsory for all prospective teachers.

[82] The variables analysis made here and throughout this section is based on crosstabulations created by pivot tables using spreadsheet software. When and if considered appropriate to determine statistical significance, the data is further assessed with chi-square tests.

changes to the 2001 descriptors and the phonological dimension of spoken language. Grounded in the figures, it is now fair comment to say that present approaches to English teaching and learning in Portugal still reflect the implied normativity of the CEFR in many a school, instead of embracing research developments stated in the CEFR – CV: "In an update, it appeared more appropriate to focus on intelligibility as the primary construct in phonological control […]" (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 47). Thus, foisting outdated aims on the user-learners which do not serve their present-day needs. Yet, whether we disavow such approaches or not, it must be stressed that Portuguese EFL teachers who do so comply with the guidelines offered by the Ministry of Education. As alluded in section I. 4, even the subject's core curriculum, published in July of 2018, did not take into account the CEFR – CV but the CEFR instead. Right on page two of the subject's core curriculum, it is stated that all the legal documents were considered: syllabus, targets and the CEFR, when in fact the most important of them all for speaking and intelligibility was left out. The next item was the only optional item of the questionnaire, being dependent on the respondents' familiarity or not with the CEFR – CV. So, only those who ticked yes (N=210) ought to answer. Most of the teachers, 52,86% (N=111), claim to be familiar with the CEFR – CV's phonology descriptors, making it the mode and the mean score (see table 18). In view of the standard deviation displayed, the answers are broadly homogeneous. Notwithstanding, 16,67% (N=35) of teachers report to be very familiar and 5,71% (N=12) report to be completely familiar with the descriptors. More alarming is the downward deviation. 22,86% (N=48) of teachers report to be little familiar and 1,90% (N=4) report to be unfamiliar with the descriptors. If we add together the 210 teachers who are not familiar with the CEFR – CV in general with those who, despite being aware of the new volume, are either unfamiliar or little familiar with the phonological dimension, we come to the conclusion that 62% (N=262) of them are yet to move away from NS norms, whose focus is usually on accuracy, mostly grammatical, and accent.

Descriptive Statistics – Q8[83]	
Mean	3,014286
Standard Error	0,057865
Median	3
Mode	3
Standard Deviation	0,838537
Count (N=)	210

Table 18 – Descriptive Statistics for Q8

The last of this set of three items directly prompt the respondents to state their perceived level of familiarity with intelligibility. In the same vein of the previous question, most responses, 42,86% (N=180), fall under the familiar side of the scale too, making it the mode (see table 19). Yet the standard deviation and the mean score show a wider dispersion of answers. Indeed, 30,48% (N=128) of teachers assert to be little familiar and 9,05% (N=38) assert to be unfamiliar with intelligibility. On the opposite end, 13,81% (N=58) of teachers state to be very familiar and 3,81% (N=16) state to be completely familiar with intelligibility. The rationale offered for the two previous items is further reinforced by the teachers' low familiarity with intelligibility. Almost 40% of them (N=166) are either unfamiliar or little familiar with intelligibility. The conceptual gap between practice and research that Seidlhofer spoke of back in 2001 is still very much alive. Hopefully, this study may contribute to close it. Intelligibility seems even now a remote concept in many Portuguese EFL classrooms with little significance to both teaching methodologies and learning paradigms, divorced from the learner-user's (spoken) sociolinguistic reality. Persistently, it is being left at the doorstep but never actually allowed inside.

Descriptive Statistics – Q9	
Mean	2,728571
Standard Error	0,045919
Median	3
Mode	3
Standard Deviation	0,941051
Count (N=)	420

Table 19 – Descriptive Statistics for Q9

[83] To be able to describe these tendencies in the data and the overall spread of scores, the short textual labels provided, unfamiliar, little familiar, familiar, very familiar, and completely familiar, were converted into a numerical scale of 1,2,3,4, and 5, respectively. The same procedure was applied to the data in table 19.

The next set of items involved four (Q10, Q11, Q17, and Q18) interrelated questions about perceived importance of speaking and pronunciation and classes/time assigned to each – In your opinion, how important is it to approach speaking in your teaching?; Thinking of speaking, how important is it to integrate pronunciation in your teaching?; On average, how many classes per term do you focus on speaking?; During your speaking classes, can you estimate how much time you allot to pronunciation? The four questions were intentionally interspaced with a different set of items so as to avoid the influence of the former upon the latter. A substantial number of teachers, 69,05% (N=290), consider approaching speaking in their teaching imperative, making it the mode and the median for this question (see table 20). These are followed by those who consider it very important, 26,67% (N=112). Without surprise the mean score for this question is expressly high – 4,64. Finally, 4,29% (N=18) of teachers answered important. Significantly, no responses were allotted to not important or little important.

Descriptive Statistics – Q10[84]	
Mean	4,647619
Standard Error	0,027372
Median	5
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0,560956
Count (N=)	420

Table 20 – Descriptive Statistics for Q10

As far as pronunciation goes the numbers are more heterogeneous. The mode here (see table 21) falls under the important side of the scale, reflecting the biggest number of answers amongst the available pool, 42,38% (N=178). However, the median, the standard deviation and the mean score show an upward trend in the responses. Indeed, 38,81% (N=163) of teachers assert that integrating pronunciation is very important and 13,81% (N=58) assert it is imperative. Taken together they account for more than half of the respondents. Only 5% (N=21) of teachers view pronunciation as little important. Taking into account the rationale offered by De Jong et al. (2012), alluded in section II. 2.1, about the strong influence of pronunciation for spoken proficiency and the speaker's speaking variance, it is

[84] The numerical conversion procedure applied to the data in tables 20 and 21 is the same as in tables 18 and 19. The slight difference between them regards the short textual labels provided, not important, little important, important, very important, and imperative.

intriguing to find that pronunciation is still dismissed from the teaching structural plan of Portuguese L2 teachers.

Descriptive Statistics – Q11	
Mean	3,614286
Standard Error	0,038253
Median	4
Mode	3
Standard Deviation	0,78396
Count (N=)	420

Table 21 – Descriptive Statistics for Q11

In line with the teachers' view on the importance of speaking, most teachers, 37,62% (N=158), claim to focus on speaking for more than 10 classes[85] every term, whilst 17,86% (N=75) claim to do it in 9-10 classes. On the opposite end, 1,67% (N=7) of teachers report to focus on speaking for only 1-2 classes per term and 16,47% (N=69) report to do it in 3-5 occasions. In the midpoint interval, we find that 26,43% (N=111) of teachers focus on speaking for 6-8 classes. Crosstabulation of the variables perceived importance of speaking and amount of focus on it displays a rather significant mismatch (see table 22). The seven teachers who report to focus on speaking for only 1-2 classes per term are amongst those who find speaking as either very important or imperative. The same is also true if we widen the range of our analysis to the next interval. Sixty-three of the teachers who find speaking as either very important or imperative allot as many as 3-5 classes to this specific skill. In view of the result provided by the chi-square test (0.00000598361), we can conclude that this relationship is non-random, there is something systematic about the high importance attributed to speaking and the low number of lessons that those same teachers allocate to its development. Perhaps, the reason is to be found in the last question of the questionnaire which regards the challenges felt by the respondents to tackle speaking and pronunciation. But, whether or not a justification for this state of affairs is given, the numbers suggest that speaking continues to lag behind the rest of the skills, despite a general awareness on its significance. All teachers (N=420) considered approaching speaking either important, very important, or imperative.

[85] The scale offered was 1-2 classes, 3-5 classes, 6-8 classes, 8-9 classes, and more than 10 classes.

Q17 / Q10	1 - 2 classes	3 - 5 classes	6 - 8 classes	9 - 10 classes	More than 10 classes	Count
Important	0	6	10	2	0	18
Very important	2	26	40	15	29	112
Imperative	5	37	61	58	129	290
Count	7	69	111	75	158	420

Table 22 – Crosstabulation of Q10 with Q17

Again, as was the case for Q10 and Q17, the perceived importance of pronunciation is reflected in the time assigned for this subset of speaking. Most teachers, 42,86% (N=180), affirm to use 6-15 minutes[86] (midpoint interval) of their speaking class to practice pronunciation, whilst 16,90% (N=71) do it for 16-30 minutes and 3,81% (N=16) for 31-50 minutes. Yet there is a large number of teachers, 35,71% (N=150), who report to practice pronunciation for as much as 1-5 minutes per speaking class. Running the risk of sounding biased, I would say that quite striking is the 0,71% (N=3) of teachers who report not to practice pronunciation at all. I am aware that less than 1% is not statistically significant, but nevertheless important. The EFL classroom is not made of statistics but people. This clearly begs for the question (based on research question number three) – How should these learners be expected/required to develop their ability to pronounce the language? Pronunciation is not the spin-off of good fortune; it requires overt teaching and learning. It seems, then, that Brown's (1991) assertion, mentioned in the introduction of the study, still holds true today, almost thirty years later. If not completely ignored, more often than not pronunciation is given little notice by the teachers inside the EFL classroom. Once more, an incongruity between variables, perceived importance of pronunciation and time allocated to it, can be found after their crosstabulation (see table 23). What stands out the most is the number of teachers who find pronunciation either important, very important or imperative, 33% (N=138), but assign it 1-5 minutes per speaking class, as well as the teacher who, despite finding pronunciation important, dismisses it completely. Here too, the chi-square test result (0.000000291031) clearly displays systematicity. The relationship between these two variables is also not random. But regardless of the

[86] The scale offered was 0, 1-5 minutes, 6-15 minutes, 16-30 minutes, and 31-50 minutes, in accordance with the Portuguese class time.

"whys", it is evident that many a teacher is unwilling to approach pronunciation. Avoiding the far left extreme, if we correlate Q17 3-5 classes interval with that of Q18 1-5 minutes, at best learners practice pronunciation for 25 minutes every term, 5 classes of 5 minutes practice each. In total it represents a class and a half (75 minutes) per school year. This is startlingly insufficient if we are to help our learner-user's pronunciation and thus their spoken language proficiency.

Q18 / Q11	0	1 - 5 minutes	6 - 15 minutes	16 - 30 minutes	31 - 50 minutes	Count
Imperative	0	12	26	15	5	58
Very important	0	50	70	34	9	163
Important	1	76	77	22	2	178
Little important	2	12	7	0	0	21
Count	3	150	180	71	16	420

Table 23 – Crosstabulation of Q11 with Q18

The following set of four items covered the issue of variety – Which variety of English do you use while teaching?; Which variety of English do you use when you are not teaching?; Which variety of English do you want your students to use while in class?; and Do you think that the variety you want your students to use while in class is the one they will need for their academic and professional future?. A massive number of teachers, 82,6% (N=347), claim to use British English in the classroom. 60,71% (N=255) use British English only, whilst the remaining 21,9% (N=92) mix it with another variety. Expectedly, the most common mix is that of British English with General American, 18,33% (N=77). I reiterate what was said earlier when discussing English in the EU. Either we discuss the spoken English of students or teachers, this is the natural outcome of formal schooling, most likely British, and the informal influence of music, TV series and the film industry, most likely American. Although Portuguese EFL teachers are well-educated and well-travelled NNS speakers, I still believe that MAE in its traditional sense put forward by Modiano (1996) (1998) (2002) is an outdated label with little applicability to describe the speakers' use of the language. As it happens, one of the teachers who opted for "other" instead of selecting one (or more) of the available options wrote: "the English I speak since I was at school myself and develop from the travels I do, the

films I watch, the music I listen to and the conversations I have with both native and non-native speakers". A high number of teachers, 33,1% (N=139), claim to use General American in the classroom. Yet just 13,10% (N=55) use it as their only standard. The remainder 20% (N=84) mixes it with another variety, usually British English. Crosstabulation of this variable with that of age or schooling points to randomness. The latter do not have a bearing on the former. In line with the variety used inside the classroom, British English is also the most used variety outside the classroom, 72,6% (N=305). 54,52% (N=229) use British English only, whilst the remaining 18,1% (N=76) mix it with another variety. Again, the most common mix is that of British English with General American, 16,43% (N=69). Conversely, outside the classroom the number of teachers who assert to use General American increases, 38,1% (N=160). The rise is even more salient if we are to consider those who use it as their only standard, 20,95% (N=88). The rest of the teachers, 17,1% (N=72) mix it with another variety, generally British English. I would say that the teachers' preference for British English may be explained by three concurring reasons: a) the geographic proximity to the UK; b) the view of British English as the most prestige standard and thus the prestige norm-providing model; and c) the strong influence, sometimes the only one, of British English on textbooks, which in turn are the teachers' teaching anchor. The teachers' own use of the language determines the students' expected variety usage while in class. 74,3% (N=312) of teachers choose the British English variety, either as the only standard, 45,48% (N=191), or mixed with another variety, especially General American, 22,86% (N=96). In the same vein, General American is chosen by 37,1% (N=156) respondents, but merely 8,57% (N=36) want their students to use as the default variety. Rather interesting for the scope of the study is the number of teachers who use the "other" option to provide different views. Although with different phraseology, 11% (N=46) of teachers say that any variety is valid, thus not expecting their learners to use any in particular. One of the teachers even suggests throwing Nigerian English into the pot. 4% (N=17) speak of communication. These teachers claim that variety is not an issue as long as the learners can communicate in English. Lastly, 1% (N=6) refer to intelligibility as their aim for the learners, not the use of a specific variety. This is as yet an exceedingly small figure but nonetheless important. Hopefully, this study will contribute to its increase. The last item of this set displays

a rather odd result. Asked to state if the variety they wanted their students to use while in class would be the one they would need for their academic and professional future, almost 30% (N=123) of the inquired teachers said No. Out of these, 21% (N=87) are teachers who expect their students to use British English in class. The question must then be asked – what is the point of demanding a given variety knowing beforehand it will not be useful for the learner-user? A clear-cut explanation for this dichotomy is difficult to provide, but a tentative one can be put forward. As a teacher myself, I would say that the predicament may lie in the mismatch between what teachers believe is best and more helpful for their pupils and the strictures they find themselves bound to, may it be the syllabus or governmental educational policies. Of course, a more straightforward answer may simply be the teachers' close adherence to textbooks, which, as pointed out above, are deeply grounded in British English.

The final set of interrelated questions comprised three items which addressed materials and activities – Which materials do you usually fall back on to approach speaking and pronunciation with your students?; Which activities do you usually employ to practise speaking with your students?; and Which activities do you usually employ to practise pronunciation with your students?. To start with, few teachers, 7% (N=30), resort to just one type of material to practice speaking and pronunciation, whilst the overwhelming majority, 93% (N=390), resorts to some kind of combination. Figure 22 highlights the most common teaching materials combinations, but also displays the five most used materials if tallied separately. Digital resources rank first with 87,4% (N=367) of teachers reporting to use them to practice speaking and/or pronunciation. Close behind, the textbook is mentioned by 76,9% (N=323) of respondents, while the textbook's additional resources are used by 72,9% (N=306) of them. 47,4% (N=199) of teachers fall back on language learning websites and 30,5% (N=128) rely on flashcards to help their students with speaking and/or pronunciation. Although alone digital resources account for the highest number of answers, it is important to notice the reliance on textbooks. Per se, the textbook and its additional resources score high, but if we add the option other textbooks, 15,5% (N=65), we come to the conclusion that textbooks surpass digital resources, 92,4% (N=388), and are in fact the most widespread material in the (Portuguese) EFL classroom. The close adherence to textbooks suggested

throughout the sections of this study is here visibly echoed by the numbers. Whether unwittingly or not, speaking and pronunciation continue to be "restricted to standard monolithic representations of language, focusing largely on standard BrE (and to a certain point AmE as well) as the only valid example" (Guerra & Cavalheiro, 2019, p. 124).

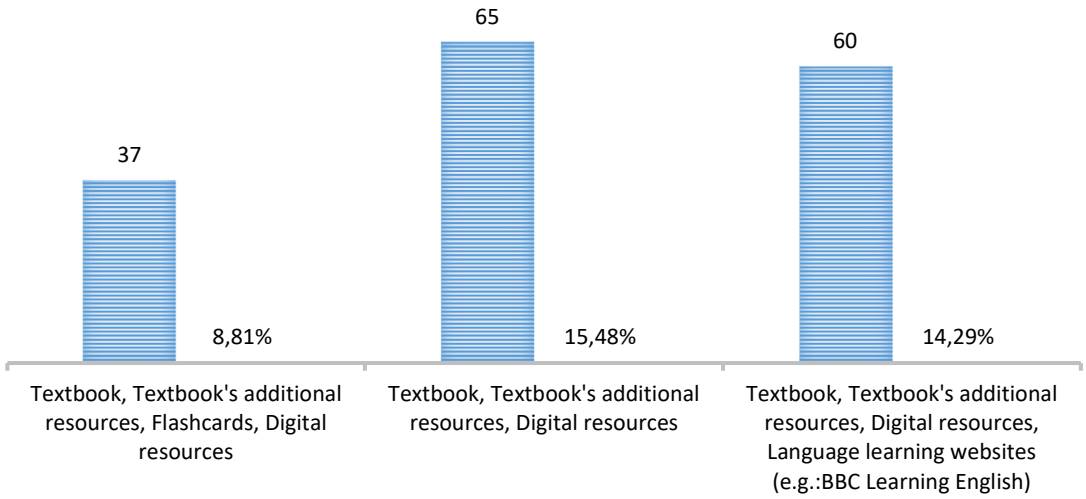

Figure 22 – Usual Teaching Materials Combinations for Speaking/Pronunciation

As for speaking activities, teachers make use of an assortment of different types of activities. In point of fact, the highest score for this question, 12,38% (N=52), is made up of all the available options – pair / group work, oral presentations, role-plays, description tasks, debates, and fun activities. Other combinations of speaking activities vary in number, ranging from as little as two and as many as five, and type (e.g., oral presentations with description tasks or pair / group work with fun activities and debates). Yet there appears to be a consistency in the choices made. Figure 23 puts on view the teachers' speaking activities hierarchy of preference when taken separately. Regardless of number and type of combination, the responses given render an obvious preference for oral presentations by a large majority of Portuguese EFL teachers. An attempt to establish a correlation between choice of speaking activities and assessment goes beyond the scope of this study, but I would argue that the dominance of summative assessment is certainly no stranger to this situation. Oral presentations easily lend themselves to be both a common speaking activity to practice as well as a one time (usually at the end of the term) speaking assessment event. One last point to note from the data of this question is the balance between spoken production and spoken interaction. Even

though there is a hierarchy, summated together the spoken production activities are marginally behind their spoken interaction counterparts.

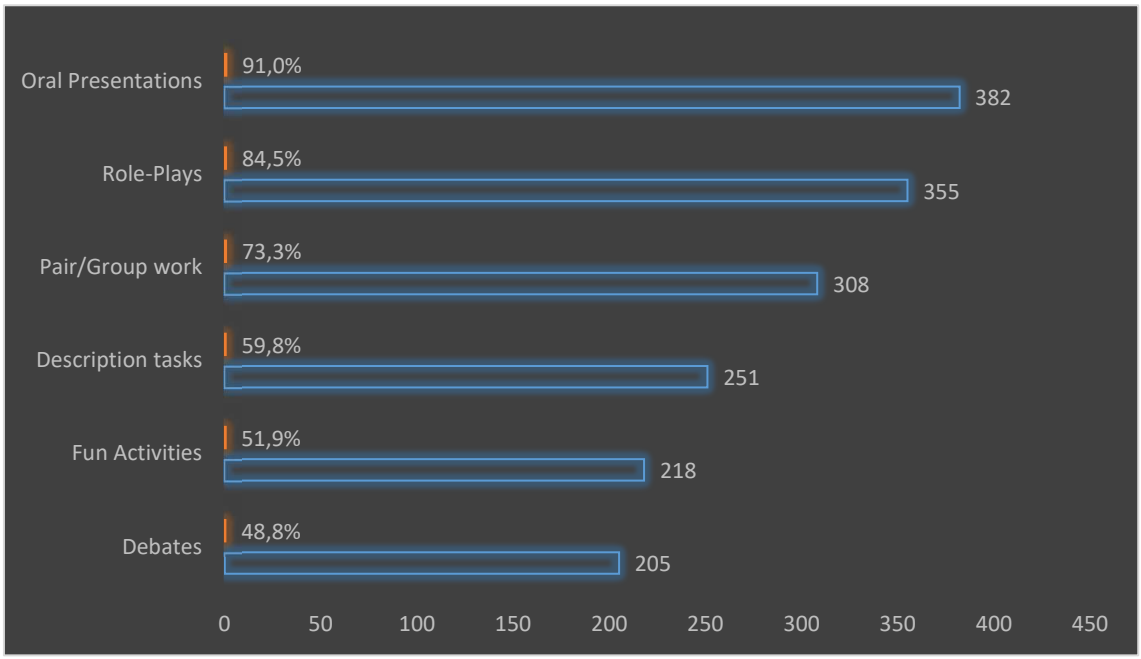

Figure 23 – Teachers' Speaking Activities Hierarchy of Preference

Bearing in mind the perceived importance of pronunciation and the time allotted to this subset, it comes as no surprise that three teachers report not to do any activity whatsoever. One of them wrote "the issues are too many to deal with". The road to Damascus seems as yet to be a bit far. Despite the same number of available options, the selection of activities for pronunciation is not as diverse as it is for speaking, nor is their combination. Teachers tend to do listen and repeat, 16,9% (N=71), oral input (explanation on how to position lips, tongue and jaw to pronounce words), 2,38% (N=10), or a combination of both, 23,1% (N=97). In fact, the lion's share of pronunciation activities goes to listen and repeat, mentioned by 93,1% (N=391) of teachers, followed at a distance by oral input (explanation on how to position lips, tongue and jaw to pronounce words), 61,4% (N=258), and farther behind by fun activities (e.g.: Chinese whispers), 26,9% (N=113), minimal pairs, 22,1% (N=93), and tongue-twisters, 21,9% (N=92). Recognisably not statistically significant but still worthy of notice, three teachers claim to address intonation through songs, two claim to teach phonetic transcription, one claims to use videos recorded by the students themselves, one claims to use videos with NS of different origins (NNS

could and should be included too), and one resorts to the Voki app[87]. These teachers, 1,9% (N=8), are amongst those who consider pronunciation either very important or imperative and teach it for 6-15 or 16-30 minutes each time they focus on speaking. They represent a small step forward to pronunciation teaching that needs to grow if we genuinely want to find its niche within the Portuguese EFL classroom. Of course, educational guidelines must also give pronunciation the impetus it needs in the curriculum, thus acknowledging the added value it has for spoken language in the Englishes world we currently live in. As they stand, they fail to do so.

Two somewhat autonomous questions complete the questionnaire – Roughly, can you estimate the percentage of English used during class time by your students?; and For you, what are the biggest constraints to approach speaking and pronunciation?. Most teachers, 31,9% (N=134), report that their students speak English in class in-between 41-60% of the time, whilst 25,71% (N=108) speak it in-between 21-40%, 9,76% (N=41) in-between 11-20%, and 2,62% (N=11) speak English in class for only 1-10% of the time. On the opposite end, 21,9% (N=92) report that their students speak English in class in-between 61-80% of the time and 8,1% (N=34) point to the 81-100% interval. The numbers for this question alone depict a relatively bleak situation. Added together, the first three intervals account for 38,09% (N=160) of respondents, which translates in a significant number of learner-users whose speaking time falls below or expressively below half of the time allotted to speaking. Even though I cannot assert with absolute certainty to which side of the scale the total count for the 41-60% interval tips, it is fair comment to say that, out of 70% (N=294), many students are far from speaking the language in a regular manner and at best a few struggle to speak it just for half of the time and/or occasions they were expected to. Imparting to the students' already insufficient speaking time, crosstabulation of the variables percentage of English used during class time by the students and number of classes devoted to speaking (see table 24) show that unlike what one could assume the latter does not impact the former. A higher number of speaking classes does not necessarily translate into more speaking. If we look at the count of the intervals 6-8, 9-10, and more than 10 classes

[87] Voki is a free app that allows its users to create custom-made talking avatars and choose the English variety they want it to speak. This is extremely helpful to assist weaker students with their pronunciation and for oral presentations with shy/anxious learners. Voki's avatars may be uploaded and/or embedded in websites (blogs).

against those of 1-10%, 11-20%, 21-40%, and 41-60% we realise that they always represent more than half of the total score. The more opportunities given to students to speak, the more they should speak. Strangely, it does not seem to be case here, as illustrated by the three teachers who report to focus on speaking for more than 10 classes every term but then claim that their students only speak the language for 1-10% of the time. As it happens, the divergence between what should be expected, and the real figures is further corroborated by the result provided by the chi-square test (0.00000000000259578). Learners do not appear to explore spoken language in accordance with number of opportunities they are offered to do so. May it be speaking language anxiety, lack of motivation or some other reason, the truth is that the data hint at an insufficient speaking of English in class. Most learners do not use the language extensively, unlike what they should as B1/B1+ independent users (threshold level).

Q17 / Q16	1 - 2 classes	3 - 5 classes	6 - 8 classes	9 - 10 classes	More than 10 classes	Count
1-10%	3	3	2	0	3	11
11-20%	0	9	13	5	14	41
21-40%	2	25	41	16	24	108
41-60%	1	20	39	29	45	134
61-80%	1	9	14	20	48	92
81-100%	0	3	2	5	24	34
Count	7	69	111	75	158	420

Table 24 – Crosstabulation of Q16 with Q17

The last question of the questionnaire prompt teachers to express their opinion about the challenges deemed most troublesome to the teaching of speaking and pronunciation. The data gathered points to diversity, yet one problem visibly stands out from the pack, that of time. Either in combination with other problems, 60,5% (N=254), or on its own, 26,9% (N=113), lack of time is by far the teachers' most mentioned challenge to tackle speaking and pronunciation inside the classroom in a well-ordered fashion. The rest of the available pool of items which may contribute to speaking and pronunciation's lack of practice is more evenly matched (see figure 24). Teachers feel they need more training, better resources, and more precise guidelines in order to integrate speaking and pronunciation with the remaining skills. If teachers do not know exactly what they are supposed to do, do not feel

comfortable and secure doing it, and do not have the means to follow through, they most likely withdraw from speaking and pronunciation. Although less significant statistically, a few other challenges are worth mentioning. 3% (N=13) refer to class size as a massive impediment for speaking and pronunciation practice. One of these teachers reports to have a class of 31. In the same vein, 2% (N=8) speak of poor behaviour and another 2% (N=8) claim it is the students' resistance to speak that hinders the whole process.

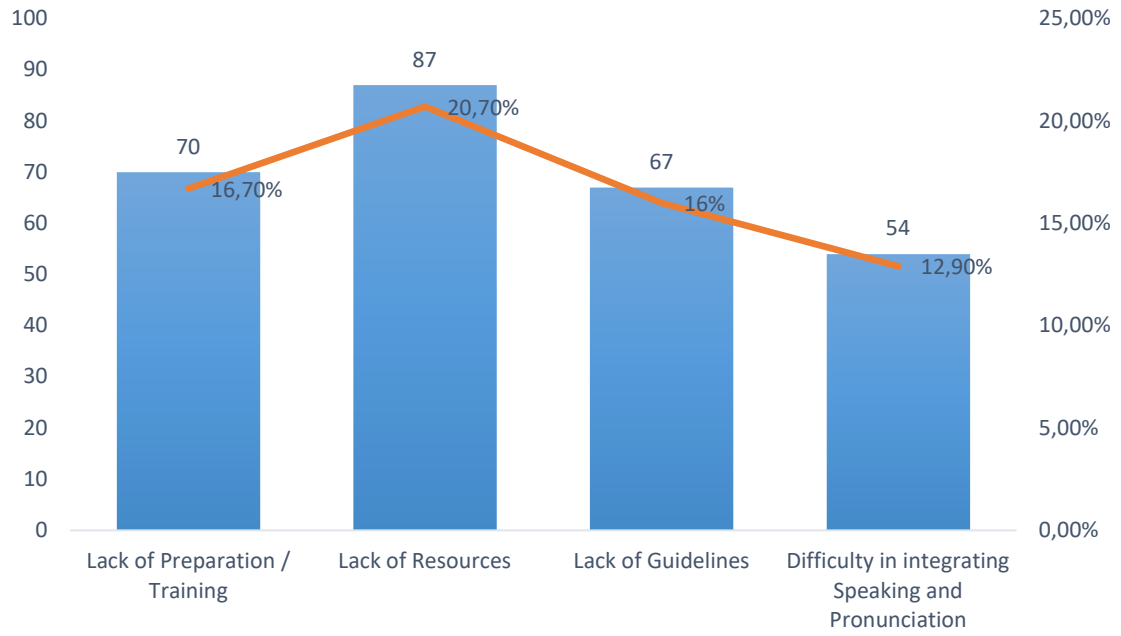

Figure 24 – Teachers' Perceived Constraints to Practice Speaking/Pronunciation

By and large, teachers face numerous challenges if they are to tackle speaking and pronunciation. However, if truth be told, some just want to play it safe while others lack the will to do so. I quote two responses to highlight my argument witnessed first-hand throughout my teaching years – "These activities are more difficult to manage", and "There is a lack of understanding and will to value this domain either in the lesson plans and/or the assessment criteria". Indeed, a reasonably high number of teachers, 21,4% (N=90), asserts not to have any constraints to approach speaking and pronunciation. These teachers correlate positively with the focus given to speaking and its pronunciation subset. Out of the 90, 82 of them fall into the 6-8, 9-10, and more than 10 classes per term intervals assigned to speaking, while 53 fall into the 6-15, 16-30, 31-50 minutes intervals of time allotted to pronunciation.

IV. 3 – The Qualitative Strand: Teachers' Interviews

The interviews took place in late July, due to the reasons identified in the research's procedure, with the two teachers who allowed me in their classrooms to observe their English lessons. The interviews were carried out online, interviewer and interviewee each at home, but still face-to-face via Google Meet video conferencing software. Bearing in mind the linguistic sophistication of the interviewees, the interviewer tried to conduct the interviews along the lines of an everyday interaction, what Burgess described many years ago as a "conversation with a purpose" (1984, p. 84). Years later, Kvale (1996) called it a "professional conversation […] whose purpose is to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena" (pp. 5-6). The intent was to let the interviewees share their perceptions of their classrooms as detailed as possible vis-à-vis speaking and intelligibility. In total the interviews lasted 105 minutes and 24 seconds, 53:10 with teacher B/C and 52:14 with teacher A. The recordings were after transcribed, following the guidelines of Humble (2009). In accordance, transcription included attention to paralanguage – pauses, laughter and emphasis given by the interviewees, despite the importance attributed to content when compared to non-verbal communication. Interview transcripts were, then, carefully read. The thematic concepts developed naturally out of the interview questions themselves – intelligibility, perceived importance of speaking and pronunciation, variety, materials and activities, students' use of English in class, and challenges felt.

To the theme of intelligibility corresponded the opening three questions of the interview – Are you familiar with the new CEFR (2018)?; (If so) Are you familiar with its phonology descriptors?; and How do you feel about intelligibility?. Teacher A is not familiar with the CEFR – CV, but with the original CEFR instead:

> I cannot really say that I was studying it in-depth. […] The other one I did. The other one I had to go to Lisbon for a week and then I had to come down to the Algarve and then form other teachers. So, the other one I was very familiar with. This one not so much.

Yet, in her opinion, the differences between the two frameworks must be minor:

> […] the essence is there, you know, the essence is the same, just with some little shifts.

Teacher B/C is not sure where she stands because she claims to have done teacher training in 2018 but did not remember if it was before or after its launch or even if the training included the CEFR – CV. Even though teacher B/C starts her answer with "I suppose so", the remainder of her answer, as well as her own questioning – "is it very different from the one before", hint at little familiarity, if any, with the new volume. With this rationale in mind, it comes as no surprise that both teachers are also not familiar with the CEFR – CV's phonology descriptors. Teacher A gave the most categorical answer of the two by claiming not to

> give it much thought, I have to be honest. I know some things that are kind of more important, but again I—it is like the other things if I did not study in-depth, I did not study that part either, you know. I know some things that I think are relevant er .., and the rest I do not really know very well about it. […] But phonology, you know, you have to use it on a practical level, but you do not teach it.

Again, teacher B/C claims not to remember to have read and/or studied anything about new phonology descriptors. However, in reaction to the teacher's answers the interviewer raised an unscripted question – Do you think that this new volume, this new CEFR of 2018 should be better brought to the teachers' attention? – which got the following answer:

> I think so because er…, maybe we are—well we have so many things to do that we do not research, see if there is anything new and we do not have time to:: …, read or to:—maybe if they send it to schools [pause] to make sure that everybody is informed. I think it would be .., a nice option …, an intelligent one because we have to establish priorities and maybe we should all read that at the beginning of the year, especially when it is a new one. […] I did not know that there was one er …, been published.

It seems, then, that an additional problem is submitted by teacher B/C. Besides the timing concerns I voiced in section II. 5.4, there is also poor publicising to consider, both at the European level by the Council of Europe and locally by the Portuguese Ministry of Education. Knowledge on the leading document for (E)FL teaching and

learning cannot be dependent upon randomness. It is not possible to rely on good fortune and expect that teachers will come across the CEFR – CV, read it, and identify the changes made, in particular the phonology dimension, by a matter of chance. The dilatory action of the Council of Europe together with the Portuguese government's inertia has contributed to the status of the CEFR and its implied NS norms in the minds of Portuguese EFL teachers. What is the point of aligning the CEFR – CV's phonological scale with current research by emphasising intelligibility while de-emphasising native-like pronunciation if teachers remain oblivious to the changes? My concern about the gap between intelligibility and the teachers is further reinforced by the answer of teacher A to the last of this set of questions. When questioned about the concept of intelligibility the teacher had this to say:

> […] it embraces a lot, but it does not really mean that much. So, it can, it can [pause] it er …, it covers a wide variety of aspects but then the outcome is not really enriching.

For her part, teacher B/C displays a rather different viewpoint. Despite her lack of familiarity with both the CEFR – CV and its phonology descriptors, teacher B/C recognises the added value of intelligibility for the learner-user:

> It is essential because if people are able to understand each other that means they are autonomous, they can go anywhere, can solve their own problems, and they will not be afraid of …, er, taking risks …, because maybe they will develop their self-confidence. […] I think that when two people are able to speak a language even if with er .., grammar incorrections or pronunciation imprecisions—if they are able to:: send their message to receive the message, that is the most important.

The two interviews, although not representative of all Portuguese EFL teachers, give an indication that intelligibility remains an evasive concept, which can mean different things to different teachers. Even more significant, is their suggestion of the differences in value attached to intelligibility for spoken production and/or interaction, especially for the ever-growing contexts of intercultural spoken interaction. Perhaps, this gap could be closed if policy makers and material writers were to assume their fair share of responsibility for the current situation by attuning

official educational documents and textbooks with the most recent developments on the importance of intelligibility.

The next set of questions imparted on the perceived importance of speaking and pronunciation – In your opinion, is it important to promote speaking in class? And within it pronunciation? Why?; and On average, how many classes per term do you focus on speaking? Do you include pronunciation?. Both teachers are adamant about the importance of speaking for their students. Teacher A asserts that

> it is extremely important in class or in any other kind of context. But obviously we are talking about students, we are talking about er .., classrooms. So, the speaking ability is extremely important because as you know English is one of the most spoken languages in the world er …, and if you do not promote the er .., the speaking ability that will be a severe handicap for the future of our students.

Whilst teacher B/C states that

> in the classroom we have to try always [sic] to use the language that we are teaching, it is the subject that we are speaking. […] So, [pause] if we only have the classroom and we do not use in the classroom we will not be teaching them to use the language. We will only teach them the grammar, or the reading, or the writing. So, if we want to improve all the skills we have to speak and make them speak.

The importance of promoting speaking for the interviewees is unquestionable. Both seem to bear in mind that speaking the language is not only the major goal for most of their students, but also what will matter for their future lives, in and out of school. Indeed, more often than not will the students manifest their language proficiency through speaking. Yet faulty pronunciation, i.e., poor intelligibility, may contribute decisively to low spoken language proficiency, thus impairing communication altogether. Here, the interviewees' opinions diverge considerably. Whereas teacher B/C continues to assign a high degree of importance to pronunciation, teacher A considers it subsidiary when compared to speaking. The former declares that

> […] we should try to improve the pronunciation because we know that when students will [sic] learn new words they will always have new

> pronunciation problems. So, whenever we have the possibility of correcting and improving it is our, it is our::: function as a teacher, as teachers to improve that, but the most important is to make sure that the students understand us, with the most correct pronunciation of course, and that they learn enough to use when they need.

While the latter considers pronunciation to be

> a different thing. Because nowadays you have a digital world around you and it is not er .., as it was some decades ago, or decade ago that everything depended on the dynamic of the classroom. Of course the classroom plays an important role and the tutor being a mediator, er .., but pronunciation, they get it much more from the media than they get from being corrected by the teacher or being called the attention by a colleague or anything of the kind.

Given the circumstances presented, it comes as no surprise that teacher A does not include pronunciation in her lessons, despite focusing on speaking on a regular basis, especially in split class lessons. On the other hand, teacher B/C does focus on pronunciation, but for short periods of time when and if learners mispronounce words. Therefore, the strategy used is mainly listen and repeat. Teacher B/C also focuses on speaking plenty, especially in split class lessons. Again, as with intelligibility, the attached value to pronunciation is based on the teacher's perceived importance and not on the development of current research.

The third thematic concept focuses on the issue of variety, comprising a set of three connected questions – Is there an English variety you tend to follow in class? And is it the same you use outside the classroom?; Is the variety you follow in class the one you expect your students to follow?; and What made you choose this one? Do you think it is the one they will need the most in their future lives?. Quite interestingly, teacher B/C embodies what happens with many a learner-user by claiming the following:

> […] I sometimes do not even …, er .., do not even know the variety that I use, I just [pause] maybe I am influenced by many things, by the books that I read, the films that I see .., so, I do not care [laughing].

The terrain treaded in the TL by NNS teachers makes them appropriate L2 models for their learner-users. For her part, teacher A claims to follow General American, both in and out of the classroom:

> Er .., it is always difficult not to have your own variety of choice. I am a product of the American variety of English. I have to admit. […] I am the same speaker wherever I am, in the classroom, in an English-speaking country, in an informal context.

Yet teacher A does not impose her variety of choice, or any for that matter, on her students, affirming to be open-minded about it. The choice is the students':

> I always tell them that now the world does not speak one variety of English, the world speaks varieties of English, speaks the so-called Englishes. […] what I tell to students is you should choose a register and er .., be true to it.

In line with teacher A, teacher B/C also does not force any variety on her learners. In her own words "they may speak "their" English. However, it is worthwhile for the scope of the study to note this teacher's remark:

> No, maybe only if we follow the books and if the books have the variety, hum::, maybe .., even if I do not want the books that we use are making us use […].

The answer to whether the learners should follow a specific variety, if any, is a clear no. But, once more the ubiquity of the textbook is brought into play. Besides strongly influencing teaching practices, textbooks strongly contribute to the hegemony of a supposed prestige variety, that of standard British English. As I see it, textbooks do not promote the pluralisation of the language, favouring a monolithic, Quirkian view of its use, nor do they reflect today's Englishes. Quirk's language ideology and its traditional approaches to the teaching and learning of English continue to be very much alive. Even if teachers, as is the case with the two interviewees, move beyond the notion that there is only *one* variety, two at best, the textbook is always at the backdrop with its linguistic shackles ready to foist its underlying strictures upon teachers and learners alike. In a globalised world, where eased mobility and technology paved the way for interaction amid speakers with distinct linguistic and

cultural affiliations, the link between language/variety and geographically defined speech communities offered by textbooks seems completely misplaced. According to teacher A, not only the textbook but also the syllabus further reinforces the dominance of British English as the preferred variety amongst teachers. Thus, the interviewer raised an unscripted question – So, do you think the syllabus is—does not reflect the learners' sociolinguistic reality? – which got the following answer:

> Er .., no and I think the syllabus does not meet the speaker's needs. If—depends on the kind of teacher, Hum! But I know teachers that do not go away from the standard English and they have always been like that and they will always be. And the syllabus helps those people not to change, not to develop er .., a new way of facing the language. […] And if you work with teenagers, especially, you have to be up to the challenge. Because teenagers revolutionise everything. Now this is the way to talk and next year it is no longer like that. They create the trends and they make the language much more alive.

It is, then, up to the teacher to move with the times and reject this geographical fallacy which has long been sponsored in textbooks and syllabi throughout.

Another major theme concerns materials and activities. Two questions aimed at gaining insight on this topic – Could you tell me which materials you usually use for your speaking activities, including pronunciation? and Could you describe some of the activities you use?. These two teachers in particular do not resort to the textbook extensively. Instead, they are more enthusiastic of digital resources. Both claim to use visual aids: short videos, film trailers, songs, flashcards/pictures and the like. They also resort to websites and web tools. As for speaking activities, the interviewees make use of a wide range of activities in different combinations. They ask their learners to do many oral presentations, but also description tasks, role-plays, debates, and to play games. Surprisingly, none of the teachers mentioned pair and/or group work. Rather dismayingly, but expectably taking into account the rationale offered for pronunciation by the teachers, no activities whatsoever were mentioned for this subset. I assume that teacher B/C may on occasion do listen and repeat but that is it. Perhaps some easy, fun activities like tongue-twisters or Chinese whispers could be part of the time/lessons dedicated to speaking. Unfortunately, it

does not seem to be the case. Two aspects related to speaking activities mentioned by the interviewees deserve further comment. One pertains to motivation. While reporting some of her speaking activities, teacher A put forward the need to make things interesting, i.e., to motivate learners. She claims that

> Motivation to speak is key. If they are not motivated to speak, they will not make an effort because even the weaker ones when they are motivated, they go like "teacher can I say first in Portuguese?", you know. Because they want to. […] if you have a motivated kid he will do whatever you ask for and he will not feel that it is an obligation, it is a pleasure and you want to participate, you want to express your views, you want to disagree, you want all those things.

Students' willingness to communicate is positively correlated with motivation, which in turn may be lessened or augmented depending on the activities submitted by the teacher. I would say that if (Portuguese) EFL teachers want to shape the learners' motivation to speak and, thus, their attitude towards the L2 speaking learning situations, they have to take advantage of the learner-user's integrative oriented motivation. Not in the traditional sense of an emotional identification with a speech community, but by a sense of belonging to the class itself and identification with their peers. Hence, it would also be advisable to rethink the extended use of the IRF format, still very much alive in many a classroom, given its potential negative effects on the learners' engagement in speaking. Another aspect refers to memorisation. This time, it is teacher B/C who, when reporting some of her speaking activities, brought the problem of memorisation into play. She declares that

> Some of the A2 or A1 students have to memorise …, because sometimes they do not know what they are saying or they just er .., put their whole text in their heads, which is not good but it is the only way they have to overcome the problem […].

I wonder how much real language acquisition takes place with memorisation. In this manner speaking is nothing but a mechanical repetition process whose transfer to real-life language-use situations appears to be hardly achievable. I am not judging teacher B/C, or any other teacher for that matter, but simply highlighting a situation that must be dealt with. In fact, teacher B/C acknowledges the problem herself,

giving the impression it is exceedingly difficult to overcome. As a teacher myself, I believe that the predicament lies in the balance between the perceived need to help the learners improve and the pressure of assessment, which translates in the pressure to achieve the success percentages projected by the school boards. However, learners are not actors and even those have to improvise. An effort has to be made to go past theatre-like speaking events with little, if any, relevance to the development of spoken language proficiency. Audiolingualism's pedagogy cannot continue to be perpetuated in our FL classrooms because it does not accord with the learners' most basic linguistic needs.

The next question – Tell me about your students' use of English in class. Do you think it is adequate?, is a theme on its own right, that of students' perceived use of English in class. Both interviewees assert that the majority of their students use English most of the times without resorting to their L1, being able to understand and be understood both in interactions with the teacher and/or peers. Still, two problems that have an effect on the learners' speaking were touched upon by these teachers. Teacher A sets forth the issue of translation. Learners who translate directly from Portuguese to English tend to have more difficulty in communicating. However, this may not be synonym of impaired intelligibility. Bearing in mind the rationale offered earlier about the *matched interlanguage speech intelligibility benefit* advanced by Bent and Bradlow (2003) it is reasonable to think that, despite inaccurate choice of vocabulary and even imprecise speech signal, familiarity of phonological forms (shared L1) allows intelligibility between interlocutors. Teacher B/C alludes to the problem of assessment criteria. Students often have positive marks without speaking, i.e., the sum of the assessment criteria for the other skills plus the percentage given to overall behaviour, interest and participation is enough to get students to the end of each school year with a final mark of 3 (on a scale of 1 to 5), repeatedly failing the speaking skill. The sooner this situation starts the harder it is to change. For teacher B/C

> It is difficult to make them speak when they are used to have a three in that subject without speaking. […] They do not feel like, they do not, they do not feel they need […].

Perhaps, this is the reason, or at least an immensely powerful one, why so many students systematically fail their anticipated level of language proficiency. B1/B1+ in the case of 9th grade, according to the subject's targets updated in 2015.

The final question of the interview – In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge to approach speaking and pronunciation in the classroom?, makes the last thematic concept coded, that of challenges felt. Interestingly, both teachers claim that their biggest challenge is to manage the heterogeneity of their classes. The foremost hurdle is, then, to conciliate the substandard spoken proficiency of several learners with their highly proficient counterparts. Tellingly, teacher A illustrates how the problem affects her teaching practice as follows:

> the hardest thing is to make them er .., speak. Create a balance, make the shy ones, the ones that have no fluency be able to start speaking and prevent the ones that feel comfortable from speaking all the time. […] you have to kind of er .., shift from a more basic level to a more advanced one, you know. […] It is very, very hard to be juggling levels and to be cutting down on students who have ideas, who are motivated, who like to learn, who are participative and very hard to say "now you stop for a while, I would like to listen to your colleague". […] you always risk losing somebody. You risk losing the ones that are very weak or losing the interest of the ones that would like to go on and not be waiting for the rest.

This dilemma is not new, teachers across the country, me included, face it every single school year. More often than not, again due to the pressure to achieve the success percentages projected by the school boards, teachers are forced to be less demanding and lower the level/complexity of the activities provided to the learners. This correlates positively with the issue of memorisation offered above. As a result, the most proficient learners are frequently confronted with far from appealing tasks for their proficiency level, which in turn translates into less commitment to work, actively participate, and study. The line between boosting the self-esteem of the least proficient learners with avoiding the demotivation of the most proficient ones is very thin and must be tread lightly. I strongly believe it is about time to think of FL teaching from a different perspective. It seems far more fitting to conceive the teaching and learning of English, and any foreign language for that matter, in terms

of proficiency levels. Instead of traditional classes, learners ought to be grouped in accordance with their language proficiency, for their own good. Weaker and stronger students would benefit from this measure. The former would not feel ashamed of their lower proficiency when compared to that of their peers, thus encouraging them to take risks and speak, whilst the latter would feel prompted to push their limits even farther. Although with different requirements and learning rhythms, both would have better chances to improve their current spoken language proficiency. Yet, this proposal does not imply following the organisational structure of private language schools, nor would it be possible in the Portuguese public educational system. A perfectly feasible solution could be split class lessons, following the example of the school I gained access to, by grouping the least and most proficient learner-users separately.

IV. 4 – The Qualitative Strand: Classroom Observations

Observational data was gathered from late September till mid-March. As referred in the research's procedure, the process finished two months before what was intended by reason of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, the issue of leaving the field did not present itself. All three classes were observed once a week, classes A and C on Mondays and class B on Thursdays. Altogether I observed 46 lessons, 13 of those with class A, 14 with class C and 19 with class B. In the same vein of interviews, observations were further supplemented by audio recordings to help code COLT PT – Part B and provide examples of learner-learner and /or learner-teacher interactions but these were particularly difficult to control. Practical problems concerning the number of recorders allowed (one), the number of students in classes A and C, the change of learners' behaviour (class B) due to the researcher's proximity and that of the recorder, and the distance of the researcher, who sat at the rear left-hand side of the classroom, to most of the students led to lengthy sequences of inaudible recordings. As it happens, insufficient quality of audio recordings while in class and possible uncharacteristic learner behaviour turned out to be one of the limitations of this work. As a result, several of the examples given to illustrate speaking and intelligibility patterns are drawn from the field notes and not from the audio recordings. All in all, just a very small section of the data from the audio

recordings was reliable and used for the analysis. Once more, I acknowledge these contingencies, yet they are but the mirror of the classroom's messiness. Although unwanted, they have been, nevertheless, the faithful experience of this study and the researcher. Indeed, "the limitations in these research settings […] are, however, part and parcel of the classroom context" (Rossiter, 2001, p. 36). It could be argued that the researcher might have produced tasks to complement the teachers' everyday classroom work for recording purposes, however that was never the intention. Such tampering of the natural course of the lessons would not only subvert the goal of showing the everyday life of real Portuguese language learning classrooms as they unfold but also threaten the authenticity of the data gathered for research question number one – how are speaking and intelligibility being addressed in Portugal's L2 classrooms?, and especially that of research question number two – are speaking and intelligibility truly a neglected party in the Portuguese EFL classroom?

Analysis of the coded data could be summarised by class, visit or categories. Taking into account the goals of the research, my choice rested upon the latter because categories allow a broader view of the studied phenomena, spanning across classes and visits. Starting with COLT PT – Part A, the first category is Participant Organisation which comprises three features – class, group, and individual. This category aims at unveiling patterns of learners' organisation, in particular if lessons tend to be teacher-centred or not. As it happens, out of 46 lessons observed 40 (87% of the time) of them were teacher-led, teacher to learner or teacher to class, which also translated in learner's individual work performing the same activity. Out of the remaining 6 lessons, 2 (4% of the time) alternated between teacher-led activities and learner-led activities, whilst 4 lessons (9% of the time) were fully learner-led, learner to learner and learner to class. It must be stressed that in 5 (9% of the time) of the total 6 lessons which involved learner-led activities learners were engaged in speaking assessment activities. All of them were asked to do the same activity, being organised twice in groups and four times in pairs. Teacher-centred instruction clearly outweighs learner to learner interaction, either in pairs or groups, allowing for few opportunities to engage in sustained speech and thus restricting the learners' possible use of the language. Yet I reinforce the term possible because some learners, either by anxiety or lack of proficiency, even if given the opportunity refuse to speak.

The second category of the observation scheme pertains to content, whose features comprise language (form, function, discourse, and interculturality) and other topics (narrow and broad). The major aim of this category is to understand whether the primary focus of the teaching-learning process is on meaning or form. Of particular interest for the scope of this study, pronunciation was coded in 6 lessons, 5 of which during speaking assessments, while vocabulary was coded in 27 lessons and grammar was coded in 35 lessons. Clearly, pronunciation does not receive the same focus than vocabulary and especially grammar. A strong emphasis continues to be attributed to grammar. Unsurprisingly, language functions were coded in all lessons, yet their importance in accurately conveying and/or interpreting meaning was never discussed nor were they interfaced with interculturality, coded only in 3 lessons throughout, say, to explain the difference between greeting a fellow teenager or an elderly person or how greetings may change across cultures. As for discourse, learners are asked to combine sequences of sentences more often in writing, coded in 16 lessons, than they do orally, coded in 9 lessons, 5 of which during speaking assessments. The subject matter of the activities had a narrow range of reference for the most part, coded in 32 lessons, whilst a broader range of reference was coded in 10 occasions. In other words, learners spent most of the time restricted to topics which apply to the classroom domain and/or their personal experiences instead of being prompted more regularly to engage with topics that go beyond their nearest environment (e.g., international events). It would seem that form outweighs meaning and within it grammar is the front runner. Regrettably, pronunciation falls by the wayside or plays second fiddle, at best.

In a similar fashion to Participant Organisation, the category Content Control which includes three features – teacher/text (i.e., the textbook), teacher/text/student, and student refers to who controls the topics being addressed and/or the activities being done during the lessons. Meaningfully, the topics and/or activities were determined by the teacher or the textbook on 38 occasions. On 12 lessons they were jointly decided by the teacher and the students, resorting or not to the textbook. Only 2 times were the topics and/or activities determined by the learners. On both occasions this happened with speaking assessments. Learners were given the opportunity to choose the topic they wanted to speak about. Drawing

on this data, it is fair comment to say that learners could be more involved in their learning by being encouraged to suggest topics and activities of their liking. Perhaps, this would contribute positively to engage those hard-to-reach learners with the language. For now, the rule is the teacher, assisted by the textbook, determining the focus of instruction.

The next category is of special interest for the scope of this study – Student Modality. The purpose of this dimension is to ascertain which skills are involved in the activities done along the lessons. This category identifies if the students are listening, reading, speaking, or writing, either in isolation or in combination. In isolation, listening was coded 15 times, reading 32 times, speaking 14 times, and writing 31 times. Speaking, closely followed by listening, falls to the bottom of the rank far behind reading and writing. Indeed, these two skills more than double the number of codings assigned to speaking and listening for that matter. Furthermore, the reading/writing combination was the most recurrent throughout, coded for 8 times, 7 with a primary focus on writing and 1 with a primary focus on reading. As it happens, apart from the odd exception (combination listening/speaking, coded on 2 occasions, both with a primary focus on listening), all the combinations coded include writing and/or reading, either with a primary or secondary focus: listening/speaking/reading (primary focus on listening), coded 1 time; listening/reading (primary focus on listening), coded 3 times; listening/writing/reading (primary focus on listening), coded 6 times; speaking/writing/reading (primary focus on reading and writing), coded 2 times; speaking/reading (primary focus on reading), coded 2 times; listening/writing (primary focus on listening), coded 1 time; listening/writing (primary focus on writing), coded 1 time; speaking/writing/reading (primary focus on reading), coded 1 time; listening/speaking/writing (primary focus on writing), coded 1 time. Tellingly, not only is speaking the least coded skill in isolation but also the skill that systematically has a subordinate role when in combination with the rest of the skills. Not once was speaking given the spotlight of instruction. Vis-à-vis research question number two, this small, but significant, section of data seems to hint at an undervalue of speaking in favour of reading and writing.

The final category of COLT PT – Part A relates to Materials, comprising the features type (minimal text, extended text, audio, and visual) and source (L2-NNS, L2-NS, L2-NSA, and student-made). This category was coded to describe the different types of materials used during the lessons, as well as whether they were subject to adjustments and/or simplification or not. The type of text used was mostly minimal (e.g., words, isolated sentences, and noticeably short paragraphs), coded in 37 lessons for a staggering 70 times, whilst extended text (e.g., sequence of sentences and/or paragraphs, dialogues, and short stories) was coded in 17 lessons for 19 times. Perhaps the focus on form, namely grammar, is no stranger to this outcome. Audio and visual materials were used in 11 lessons each. The source of classroom instruction is heavily dependent on L2-NNS materials (e.g., teacher-prepared exercises, textbook, and additional resources of the textbook) coded in 45 out of 46 lessons, of which 38 relied on the textbook. Thus, it comes without much surprise that: a) many of the topics covered during the lessons are narrow, and b) the content of the lessons is controlled by the textbook. In fact, only 4 lessons had the contribution of exclusively student-made materials. On 8 occasions student-made materials and L2-NNS materials were used in the same lesson. L2-NS materials (e.g., brochures, advertisements, and newspapers in L1) and L2-NSA materials (e.g., brochures, advertisements, and newspapers in L1 adapted for L2 purposes) were never used. As far as speaking is concerned, a final comment about this category is here in order. Most of the codings for the feature extend text with that of student-made materials involved the writing skill. Learner-prepared extensive speaking was only brought into play in the course of speaking assessments. Learners seem not to have as many opportunities for extensive spoken production as they should and specially to participate in *authentic* L2 interaction.

COLT PT – Part B characterises the spoken production and interaction of both the teachers and the learners across five identical categories – Target Language, Information Gap, Speech, Reaction, and Incorporation of Student/Teacher Utterances. Notwithstanding, two of these (speech and incorporation of student/teacher utterances) do not share the same features. Moreover, the learners' communicative behaviour is coded in two additional categories – Discourse Initiation and Form Restriction. Bearing in mind that teachers initiate discourse all the time and are not restricted to any linguistic form it seemed unnecessary to code

these dimensions for teachers, whereas learners vary considerably in the number of self-initiated turns and are often restricted by the teacher, textbook, and/or activity to produce pre-set language. The differences highlighted form the rationale for a twofold analysis of COLT PT – Part B.

Teachers use the TL extensively, coded in all 46 lessons, resorting only to the learners' L1, coded in 10 lessons, for discipline, managerial directives, and specially explanations. This was particularly conspicuous with class C, the least proficient of the three observed. The issue of NNS teachers of English possible lack of proficiency alluded in section II.3 does not have a bearing with teacher A nor teacher B/C. They display a strong sense of confidence both in their language proficiency as speakers and their ability as teachers. Despite an extensive use of the TL, the information given or requested (usually in the form of display questions) is mostly predictable, coded in 40 lessons. Information is, then, easily anticipated and/or known in advance by the teacher. Unwittingly, learners are not as motivated as they could be to engage in speaking. Learners tend to be more prompt to speak when given or requested (usually in the form of referential questions) unpredictable information, which was coded on 12 occasions. As for speech, teachers move back and forth between longer (at least three main clauses) and shorter (long phrases and/or one or two main clauses) stretches of spoken language. More often than not sustained speech is embedded in minimal speech. This is reflected by their occurrence in the course of the lessons. The former was coded on 18 occasions whilst the latter was coded on 43 occasions. Yet such scenario does not translate into more opportunities for learners to engage in extended discourse. Instead, it indicates a preference for frontal work. From beginning to end of the observations, teachers reacted both to form and message of the learners' utterances. Still, the tendency is to react a bit more to form, coded in 37 lessons, than to the content of the message, coded in 30 lessons. This suggests a positive correlation between this category and the coding of the dimension type of text used (minimal or extended) under the category Materials in COLT PT – Part A. Taking into consideration that reaction (to form or message) and incorporation of student utterances are intertwined categories, it comes as no surprise that most of the codings for the latter were assigned to the dimensions correction, coded on 31 occasions, and feedback, coded on 45 occasions. Yet it must be said that out of those 45 times 17 were form-related, i.e., although they were not

linguistic corrections per se more focus was given to form rather than message. This happened plenty with verb tenses (e.g., T: What's the structure of the present perfect – S: have + past participle – T: Very good / That's it.). The remainder three dimensions that fall under the scope of the incorporation of student utterances category, expansion, clarification request, and elaboration request, had virtually no role in the instruction. The first was coded in 3 lessons while the second and the third were coded in 2 lessons. Almost no building on the learners' utterances took place during the lessons. Arguably, learners' speaking proficiency could benefit if their utterances were further developed and elaborated upon.

Shifting the focus to the learners, it goes without saying that their verbal interactions vary considerably from their teachers. The first category of learners' spoken interaction, Discourse Initiation, measures the frequency of their self-initiated turns. Following the rationale for the original COLT, "it's important to note that self-allocations, such as calling out an answer, are not considered to be *Discourse initiations*" (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995, p. 87). Unlike what happens in everyday spoken interaction where speakers engage in turn-taking behaviour, the learners observed initiated discourse in no more than 20 lessons. Besides, they did so, mostly resorting to Portuguese for clarification requests, coded in 9 lessons for 25 times. Discourse initiation using the TL was coded in 11 lessons, of which 2 refer to one student only (South African learner from class C) and 1 refers to discourse initiation while undergoing speaking assessments. Thus, the learners took the floor as they would in authentic interaction on 8 occasions. Although learners are sensible to turn-taking, I would say that being left to response mode for most of the time handicaps their repertoire of language functions. The small number of self-initiated turns by the learners are the combined result of low proficiency, language-skill-specific anxiety (negative self-confidence and self-efficacy), and the teacher-centred nature of the class. Perhaps, if pair and group-work were favoured learners would feel more encouraged to initiate discourse and thus use a greater variety of language functions whilst steadily developing their overall spoken language proficiency.

Ensuing Discourse Initiation is Target Language use. This category was coded to measure whether the learners use English to interact or not. As it happens, L2 use was coded in 41 lessons whilst L1 use was coded in 14. But in truth, on this specific

item, coding alone veils the reality of the learners' communicative behaviour. Although the number of lessons ticked for L2 use is far greater than the one ticked for L1 use, the former happens with extremely limited words, usually in response to the teacher, whilst the latter, as alluded for Discourse Initiation, happens often and extensively within the same lesson. Moreover, between learners themselves interaction occurs almost exclusively in Portuguese. Learners do not speak in English as much as they could because they feel they do not need to; their interlocutor shares a common L1 with them. Drawing on my field notes, in 39 lessons out of a possible 46 I wrote comments about the learners' consistent use of the L1 to interact amongst themselves, even the stronger ones, despite being prompt by the teachers to do so in English (e.g., "Students interact with each other in Portuguese, instead of English. They answer the teacher in English though"; "Most of the talking that took place amongst students was held in Portuguese not English"; "During the task students help out each other a lot, […] yet they continue to do so in Portuguese instead of English, even the strongest students"). It is true that the learner-users should make good use of all resources available to communicate intelligibly, including resorting to Portuguese, but it is also true that relying on the L1 extensively at the expense of L2 limited use will make speaking proficiency development unlikely. This is a hard battle to fight for all EFL teachers worldwide in environments, like the Portuguese, where most learners share the same L1.

The Information Gap category coding for the learners is closely connected to that of the teachers. Bearing in mind that teachers spent most of the lessons requesting predictable information, it comes as no surprise that learners provide equally predictable information in the course of classroom interaction with their teachers. Thus, predictable information was coded on 40 occasions while unpredictable information was coded on 15. Besides the clear unbalance between the two types of information exchanged, it must be said that out of these 15 lessons where unpredictable information was given and/or requested 1 refers to oral presentations, one to reading aloud (new text with unknown information), 3 to speaking assessments, and 2 to one student only (again, the South African learner from class C). Unlike the high degree of unpredictability present in daily discourse, the data for this category shows that unpredictable information exchange between

interlocutors is not routine throughout, occurring as part of normal lessons on 8 occasions only.

The next category is of special interest for the scope of this study – Speech. Besides measuring the length of learner's speech, ultraminimal (one or to two words), minimal (three or more words, long phrases and/or one or two main clauses), and sustained (at least three main clauses), this category includes the intelligibility dimension. Learners move back and forth between ultraminimal speech, coded in 26 lessons, and minimal speech, coded in 25 lessons. Sometimes the difference in coding is truly little, minimal speech could easily become ultraminimal (e.g., "Yes teacher" vs. "I don't know"). Many learners do not go beyond five word stretches of spoken language. This is particularly salient with class C. Twice I overheard learners whispering to each other "Não sei as palavras" (I do not know the words) and "Não sei nada de Inglês" (I do not know anything of English). Also tellingly, sustained speech was coded in as little as 9 lessons, of which 4 matched up with speaking assessments, 1 with oral presentations, 1 with reading aloud, and 1 with a single student within the entire class (once more, the South African learner from class C). Adding to the challenge, sustained speech stemmed from speaking assessments is very prepared and memorised making it sound unnatural. Thus, learners struggle with their speaking when they forgot their lines. In this fashion speaking is far from being authentic. All in all, just twice did learners engage in unplanned sustained speech. The amount of spoken language produced by the learners is clearly small. In the same vein of what was suggested for Discourse Initiation, pair and group work would conceivably increase the learners' opportunities to engage in sustained speech rather than just a few words. Bearing in mind the rationale offered thus far for this category and that of target language use, the coding of the intelligibility dimension proved rather difficult. Again, coding in itself conceals an intricate matter. In fact, learners were deemed intelligible in 34 lessons against 3 in which they were considered unintelligible. Yet all 3 were coded when the learners engaged in sustained speech. Thus, a positive correlation between being highly intelligible and the high number of coding for being intelligible should not be made. It is fairly easy to be intelligible in short stretches of one to five words. On the other hand, it is impossible to determine if the learners would be

deemed intelligible as many times if they were to engage in sustained speech more often. Notwithstanding, a few remarks about the learners' intelligibility are fitting:

- Some learners have intelligibility problems not because of poor pronunciation but speaking anxiety. At times students speak with a rather creaky, trembling voice. On other occasions students speak in an exceptionally low voice (sometimes barely audible) causing intelligibility problems. Bearing in mind my construct of general intelligibility, when this happens it is exceedingly difficult for the listener to identify the speaker's utterance. Perhaps, learners would be more relaxed if they had the chance to use extended chunks of language more often and thus heighten their intelligibility;
- Word stress changes occur consistently, yet they do not impair intelligibility, which matches Jenkins' (2002) LFC non-core features for mutual intelligibility. The most noticeable example of this pattern are regular verbs when used in the past simple: cover'ed instead of 'covered; experience'ed instead of ex'perienced; and so forth. But it also happens with different word classes like adjectives (ma'jor instead of 'major) or nouns (diffi'culties instead of 'difficulties);
- In the same vein, the use of Portuguese influenced words is regular, but it does not pose intelligibility problems amidst students: e.g., "loose time" instead of "waste time", "I have 14 years old" instead of "I am 14 years old" or "look TV" instead of "watch TV". It accords with Bent and Bradlow's (2003) matched interlanguage speech intelligibility benefit. It is difficult to say if intelligibility would be impaired with non-Portuguese listeners, either NNS or NS, but here speaker familiarity and particularly phonological familiarity influenced the listeners' ability to identify and process the speakers' utterances;
- Mispronunciations occur on occasion, but most are quickly solved. Usually through self-repair, as in the word photo initially pronounced /ˈpəʊtəʊ/ and promptly corrected to /ˈfəʊtəʊ/

because the learner noticed that her partner frowned or resorting to kinesics as in the word bone pronounced /bɒn/ instead of /bəʊn/ by using the learner's own body. However, at intervals a few mispronunciations impaired intelligibility as was the case with bought pronounced /bəʊt/ instead of /bɔːt/, despite the provided context;

- Learners hesitate and even stop speaking when they are not sure on how to pronounce the words. These hesitations and/or stops are conducive to an uneven rhythm of speech which causes intelligibility problems and thus communication breakdowns because they disrupt the flow of speech and limit interaction;
- Many learners experience difficulties in pronouncing consonant digraphs. The digraph /th/ either silent or voiced: e.g., breath-taking and though. Usually, learners substitute /t/, /s/, /f/ for voiceless /θ/ and /d/, /z/, /v/ for voiced /ð/. Also, the digraph /ch/ when producing the sounds /tʃ/ and /k/: e.g., the word exchange pronounced /ɛksˈʃeɪndʒ/ instead of /ɛksˈtʃeɪndʒ/ and the word chemistry /ˈʃɛmɪstri/ instead of /ˈkɛmɪstri/. Finally, the digraph /gh/ when producing the /f/ sound and when it is silent. Learners struggle to distinguish between the two. In words like cough or laugh where the /f/ phoneme at the end of the word has to be pronounced speaking simply comes to a halt because learners do not know how to pronounce the words properly whereas with silent /gh/ learners either follow the same pattern or insert different phonemes as in daughter pronounced /ˈdɔktə/ instead of /ˈdɔːtə/. In truth, there are few reliable spelling patterns that teachers can provide their learners with that indicate which sound, if any, is to be pronounced. This snippet of data correlates positively with the rationale offered in section II. 5.4. about English's gap between its pronunciation and spelling. Moreover, it also endorses my claim on the practical difficulties felt by Portuguese learner-users to pronounce the digraph /th/ and further extends it by adding the digraphs /ch/ and /gh/. So, I

reiterate the need to consider these consonant sounds essential for intelligibility too;

- Besides style and vocabulary, more (spoken)proficient learners adapt their intonation, rhythm, stress, and articulatory precision taking into account the language proficiency of their less proficient peers.

The listing provided showcases some of the features deemed as idiosyncratic of the Portuguese learners' intelligibility patterns.

Following speech comes the second category coded only for learners – Form Restriction. The purpose of this category is to determine whether or not learners are at liberty to test hypothesis about how the language system works, i.e., if their utterances are limited by linguistic restrictions imposed upon them by the teacher, the textbook and/or the activities. As it happens, most of the utterances produced by the learners had a substantial degree of restriction, coded in 37 lessons. Even when some linguistic leeway was allowed there was always an expectation hovering close by that learners would produce a particular set of language. On the opposite end, the production of unrestricted utterances was coded on 9 occasions, of which 3 corresponded to speaking assessments, 2 to oral presentations, and another 2 to a single student within the entire class (without surprise, the South African learner from class C). In a similar fashion to the information gap category, the data for this category also contradicts the natural use of the language. Only twice did the learners have the opportunity to experiment with the language and test how it works without fixed expectations or impositions by the teacher, text, or task.

The last two categories, Reaction (to form or message) and Incorporation of Student/Teacher Utterances, were coded in combination because the former represents reactions to what was uttered previously. The reaction category was coded to differentiate between reactions to the linguistic conventions or the meaning of an utterance whilst the incorporation of student/teacher utterances was coded to provide information on how previous utterances were built upon. The first comment to be made is that learners did not incorporate their peers' utterances in any dimension – repair, expansion, clarification request, and elaboration request, just the teacher's. So, taking into account that both teachers reacted mostly to form

by correcting and giving feedback, it comes as no surprise that this interactional pattern was mirrored by the learners. Form and repair were coded on 11 occasions each whereas reaction to message was coded in 7 lessons, 2 of which resorting to Portuguese, expansion was coded in 6 lessons, 2 of which resorting to Portuguese, clarification requests were coded in 9 lessons, 3 of which resorting to Portuguese, and no elaboration requests were made. It seems, then, that learners follow their teachers' lead being more concerned with form than content and failing to grasp several opportunities to build upon the utterances of their peers by expanding, developing, and elaborating them. This is clearly a missed chance to improve overall oral proficiency.

IV. 5 – Side-by-side Comparison of Databases

Following the parallel mixed design nature of this study, it is now time to merge and compare the two sets of data with the purpose of verifying if they display convergent or divergent results. As it happens, despite a diligent search across databases, regardless of sample size, to find contradictory evidence germane to the research questions – How are speaking and intelligibility being addressed in Portugal's L2 classrooms?; Are speaking and intelligibility truly a neglected party in the Portuguese EFL classroom?; and If so, How should learners be expected/required to develop their ability to [speak and] pronounce a language? – no substantive conflicting patterns were found.

The vast majority of teachers is not familiar with the CEFR – CV. It is the original CEFR instead that resonates amongst them the most. The tardy response of the Council of Europe to the global development of different Englishes is negatively reflected locally across EFL environments such as the Portuguese. Not only should the Council of Europe have acted swiftly, but also been more proactive in making the new volume widely known outside the ivory tower of academia. In the same vein, neither did the Portuguese Ministry of Education include the much-needed changes hinted at the CEFR – CV for speaking and pronunciation in the leading educational guidelines for EFL, nor did it offer any kind of training for in-service teachers – CPD courses. It comes, then, as no surprise that teachers with a profound knowledge of the volume's phonology descriptors and the concept of intelligibility are few and far

between. If intelligibility is to become, as it should, significant for EFL teaching methodologies and learning paradigms it must be made accessible for teachers, explained, and recognised in national EFL educational guidelines. Otherwise, we run the risk of not closing the conceptual gap between practice and research by letting intelligibility fall by the wayside and therefore fail to acknowledge the added value of this construct for communicative success or failure. Even those who do so, as is the case of teacher B/C, do not reflect that awareness on their teaching practice. Drawing on research question number two, for the time being, it is fair comment to say that intelligibility, and thus pronunciation, is given little attention, if not completely overlooked, by the teachers in many a classroom. I wonder how the learner-users will attach any meaning to what they are saying or hearing if they are unable to map productive and receptive words and/or utterances onto their phonological inventories. Although teachers are adamant about the importance of speaking, in truth, when compared with the rest of the skills, it is not much better than intelligibility. Speaking clearly lags behind listening, reading, and especially writing in number of lessons allocated to its development on its own and/or in combination. Unfortunately, like intelligibility, speaking is not part of normal lessons. Almost thirty years later, Samuda's words seem still fresh and very much alive. Thinking of the little progress we have made, I find myself at a junction between what I would like to say and what I must say – speaking falls through the cracks of the Portuguese EFL classroom, being the poor relation of ELT.

Speaking is, then, the least practiced student modality along with its pronunciation subset. To add to the predicament, even those cases whose number of speaking classes is higher do not translate into more extensive use of the language. Furthermore, here I found a slight discrepancy, not between databases but within the qualitative database; i.e., between the teachers' self-reported use of English orally by their learners and classroom observations. Teachers tend to overrate the learners' use of English both in teacher-learner and learner-learner situations. Classroom observations display a rather different communicational pattern. Amongst themselves learners use their L1 for most of their interactions, whilst they do use English with the teacher but in an extremely limited fashion. Elaborating on the importance of speaking, it is Swain (2000) who claims that

> […] the importance of output could be that output pushes learners to process language more deeply - with more mental effort - than does input. With output, the learner is in control. In speaking or writing, learners can 'stretch' their interlanguage to meet communicative goals. To produce, learners need to do something. They need to create linguistic form and meaning, and in so doing, discover what they can or cannot do. […] Students' meaningful production of language output would thus seem to have a potentially significant role in language development (p. 99).

By the same token, Oliver (2009) speaks of peer oral interactions as fundamental for meaning negotiation and thus improved output: "As well as attaining input, through interaction learners produce comprehensible output, that is, they modify their own contributions to a conversation in order to make themselves understood" (p. 136). Although Oliver's rationale was originally put forward having very young learners (aged five to seven) in mind, it can easily apply to the cohort studied here or even older. There is considerable evidence throughout literature demonstrating the significance of speaking, yet in Portugal extensive speaking occurs mainly as the spin-off of assessment events. Then again, I wonder how students are supposed to provide extensive chunks of spoken language for assessment purposes if oral practice is not part of normal lessons. This set of circumstances positively correlates with how speaking is being addressed in Portugal's L2 classrooms. Routinely, teachers opt for oral presentations, role-plays, and description tasks with an assessment frame of mind. More often than not, these take after the printed word. Learners think and/or discuss amongst themselves, if it involves pairs, in Portuguese and write down their sentences/text in English. This uncharacteristic planning in advance for speaking is followed by plenty of memorisation and rehearsal. In this vein, learners' speech sounds unnatural, bookish, and too formal. The written-based orthodoxy I spoke of at the beginning of section II. 5 is here confirmed. In the same vein of speaking, pronunciation practice is not systematic throughout. If truth be told, it is almost non-existent. Despite the perceived importance of pronunciation, a properly functioning pronunciation practice approach is entirely set aside. On the very few occasions which hint at pronunciation practice what is done is actually correction and feedback. If and when the learners mispronounce words the teacher says the word properly pronounced, the learners

listen and repeat, and the lesson carries on. Indeed, the lion's share of self-reported pronunciation activities goes to listen and repeat, but this is done on the spur of the moment and not on a regular basis to address potential intelligibility problems, say, digraphs. So, as far as pronunciation, and thus intelligibility, is concerned, the straightforward answer for research question number one is: the practice of this subset is either null or done haphazardly. The combination between the pressure to achieve success percentages projected by school boards and some of the challenges felt every day in the field – lack of guidelines, lack of training, difficulty in integrating speaking and pronunciation, and heterogeneous classes – clearly influences how speaking and intelligibility are being addressed in Portugal's L2 classrooms negatively.

Where does this leave us, i.e., how should learners be expected/required to develop their ability to [speak and] pronounce a language? Research question number three is, perhaps, the trickiest to answer because there is no clear-cut explanation to offer. Notwithstanding the importance ascribed to speaking and pronunciation, the type of input practised in many Portuguese classrooms does not generate sufficient oral proficiency skills for the learner-user's future needs. Ultimately, the balance between centrifugal and centripetal language teaching forces is determined by the teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and convictions of what is needed for their learners, according to the importance attached to speaking and its subsets when compared to writing, grammar, and accuracy. As might be expected, there is a fair amount of proficiency variation amongst learners, but the need to approach speaking and pronunciation in class is unquestionable. Both must be addressed in a planned, systematic fashion, especially if we take into account English's increasing gap between grapheme-phoneme correspondence due to the language´s spread. Such a non-phonemic language requires a threshold of intelligibility, unattainable if not practiced. If the linguistic factors were not curb enough on their own, the learners' maturity must also be considered. Unlike their older counterparts, most 9th grade learners have a passive role towards their own learning, reacting to the teachers' lead and consequently exercises with little or no relevance to the oral skills laid down for them by textbooks. Very few "learn proactively, taking initiatives to plan, structure and execute their own learning processes" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 141). Thus, if left to chance inside the

classroom, only a slim minority of learners will develop the ability to speak and pronounce the language intelligibly. In harmony with the CEFR – CV's Phonological Control descriptor, by combining controlled (inside the classroom under artificial conditions) with functional speaking practice (outside the classroom in some sort of situational context of their liking, such as gaming), these learners develop their ability to produce intelligible articulated sounds in the form of words and/or utterances and prosodic patterns to convey different shades of meaning as speakers and distinguish meaningful strings of phonological elements as listeners. This means that on the opposite side of the scale a large majority of learners is unable to map productive and receptive words and/or utterances onto their phonological inventories. Tellingly, the following example taken from the classroom observations made illustrates my point:

T: Read the sentence, please.

S: I don't know. I can't do it (said in Portuguese).

T: So, repeat after me: Mr Spencer …

S: Mr Spencer (in an extremely low voice).

T: Louder, please!

S: Louder, please!

Like a mockingbird this student did nothing but mimic her teacher, failing to attach any meaning to the words she said and heard. Once more intelligibility in its narrow sense proves itself determinant for communicative success or failure in and outside the classroom. I would say that a consensus about the importance of speaking and pronunciation is not enough and a consensus on how learners develop their ability to speak and pronounce English is not needed, although I advocate a maximisation of explicit and implicit input. First, because perceiving the significance of the oral skills but stopping at that does not suffice to generate practical communicative empowerment. Second, because there are many and varied learning styles and so are the possibilities to achieve such goal, some of which mentioned by the teachers themselves both in the questionnaire and the interviews. I strongly believe that the consensus must revolve around effective oral practice as part of normal lessons, otherwise most learners will not be able to develop their ability to speak and

pronounce the language intelligibly, from a NNS standpoint as future ELF users in situational speaking communities.

IV. 6 – Closing Remarks

This chapter opened the window of the Portuguese EFL classroom in the most honest possible way by looking at the intricate reality of real language learning classrooms with real learners and real teachers, and thus keeping away from falling into the trap of the ivory tower research. The goal was to understand what teachers do or do not do in terms of speaking proficiency, having as criterion the concept of intelligibility.

The results of the questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations were here presented and discussed, bearing in mind the study's framing scope: a) the role of speaking and intelligibility in Portugal's L2 classrooms, b) the status of speaking and intelligibility in the Portuguese EFL classroom, c) how is the ability to speak and pronounce English intelligibly being developed amongst Portuguese students. The chapter developed with each set of data, regardless of strand, being examined and interpreted separately and then brought together to check over for substantive rival results or otherwise.

By and large, the variables analysis made throughout does not display significant differences between databases. As it happens, with very few minor variations, pronunciation practice, and thus intelligibility, is limited to the occasional correction and feedback in the form of listen and repeat; whilst underlying speaking practice is a written-based orthodoxy reminiscent of a long writing tradition of teaching and learning a foreign/second language which continues to fall into the trap of considering spoken writing as speech. Teachers are letting themselves be negatively guided by the impact of washback and not by learning. Hence, most activities carried out reflect assessment demands instead of catering to the learners' needs. I would say this is but an echo of the Ministry of Education's legal action back in 2007 (see footnote 37). In line with its practice, evidence substantiates the claim that intelligibility is still a disregarded concept whose added value for the learner-user's spoken proficiency is yet to be grasped.

Many a teacher is unaware of the CEFR – CV or the volume's phonology descriptors, turning intelligibility, and thus pronunciation, into a linguistic sightseer who pays the occasional visit, never being allowed to stay long. By the same token, speaking plays second fiddle to the rest of the skills, especially writing. There is a considerable mismatch between the perceived value of speaking and the ways it is put into practice. Speaking is not approached systematically in the Portuguese EFL classroom. Complications arise from the preference of accuracy over fluency, form over meaning, and grammar rules over language in use.

Speaking is still to find a fitting position amongst teachers and their classrooms. Accordingly, many learners' ability to speak and pronounce English intelligibly is severely impaired because they are unable to develop their phonological inventories by themselves. The tendency should be, naturally enough, to make things simple: provide learners with sufficient speaking and pronunciation practice enabling them to become intelligible, and thus likely to be successful, ELF users. Yet, if truth be told, the poor educational guidelines offered by the Ministry of Education must also be held accountable. Neither the English targets nor the subject's core curriculum recognise the differences between the learners' learning/teaching context (EFL one) and the learners' actual context of TL use in the real-world (ELF one). These continue to share the ideology of the Modern Foreign Languages paradigm, as they are governed by the CEFR. This mismatch is further reinforced by two additional problems: a) the language's range of reference; and b) what I nominate the textbook trap. In what concerns a), speaking's limitation of use is grounded in both the topics suggested for spoken interaction, mostly narrow, and the planning in advance recommended for spoken production, which in turn translates in memorisation and rehearsal. For spoken interaction, the subject's core curriculum states that learners must "interact, with correction, on familiar topics […]" (Ministry of Education and Science, 2018, p. 6, my translation); whilst for spoken production, the targets assert that learners must "(re)produce oral texts, prepared in advance, with the proper pronunciation and intonation" (Bravo, Duarte, & Cravo, 2015, p. 10, my translation). Also noteworthy is the use of the words correction and proper hinting at native-like accuracy and accent over fluency and intelligibility. As far as b) goes, without extensive practical suggestions for speaking and pronunciation activities, most teachers inevitably resort to the textbook and the

printed word. Not only is the textbook a ready-to-use material, but also provides a sense of security by offering far from spontaneous spoken activities which are more difficult to manage, especially with big classes. Although recognising the value of the targets' support notebook, on the one hand it does not make any reference to pronunciation activities, limiting pronunciation to online videoclips on the differences between varieties of English, mainly British and American, and on the other fails to do what it purports, i.e., support the teachers, by assigning them with full responsibility for the organisation and selection of materials, as well as, surreptitiously, the onus for the learners' success or otherwise:

> With the targets, the challenge for teachers consists in getting students to communicate in English and attain B1 level in Reading, Listening, Writing and Speaking by the time they finish 9th grade. To do so the teacher must choose the materials wisely, know the characteristics and ability of the students, and create a classroom dynamic conducive to learning (Bravo, Duarte, & Cravo, p. 3, my translation).

Confronted with discipline issues, number of students per class and the difficulty to conceive, contrive, and operationalise suitable speaking/pronunciation activities, most teachers end up falling into the textbook trap whose educational guidelines should help avoiding. Opportunities for the learner-users to speak and interact in English become scarce, making speaking practice insufficient and fragmented. Looking back with the advantage that only time could give, conducting textbook analysis as a tool of data collection in this study would have proven relevant for the meta-inferences drawn. This is clearly a possible area for further research. In fact, the development of oral proficiency and intelligibility in the (Portuguese) EFL classroom would benefit a great deal if they were ever incorporated in the textbook as one of its main goals.

Conclusion

ELT research on oral proficiency in Portugal is still very limited. As the first project of its kind in the Portuguese context it was not an easy task to reach a satisfactory ending, i.e., to make it useful and relevant for other researchers but especially for other teachers, by contributing to the understanding of the complex nature of the classroom and how effectively speaking and intelligibility are being approached in the Portuguese EFL setting. As Richards (2003) puts it, "[…] if it is to be worth its salt, research must have relevance to others […]" (p. 288).

It is assumed throughout that the focus of this study stemmed from my own experiences and assumptions as both a researcher and a language teacher and how I perceive EFL spoken teaching and learning. These shaped my belief that speaking and its pronunciation subset, hence intelligibility, were absent from the teachers' teaching methodology in many a classroom. The project was therefore the end result of this belief and my attempt to validate whether my original premiss was accurate or not. In order to do so, the territory of speaking and pronunciation practice was carefully outlined and described. Problems, both theoretical and practical, were identified and discussed.

In *Setting the Scene*, I started by briefly explaining the study's aims, its significance in the field of language teaching methodology, both for Portugal and abroad taking into account the similarities between EU's ELT practitioners, and how the study would unfold for the whole of its sections. Next, to set up a linguistic frame of reference, the chapter moved on to discuss the connection between English and globalisation, as they go hand in hand. Since the aftermath of World War II, English seems to be all around us. Even if we are not living in an English-speaking country, English is everywhere, either on the street (shop's names, advertisements, restaurant's menus, notices on public transports, and the like) or in the comfort of home (TV series, films, music, surfing the web, etc.) English is all-embracing. English facilitated globalisation but was changed by it as well. The ever-growing number of speakers from all four corners of the world influenced how the language developed and certainly will continue to do so, especially in its spoken form. Kachru's (1985) seminal concentric circles of World Englishes, despite their added value to understand the sociolinguistic spread of English globally, no longer reflect today's

use of the language by its speakers, as the boundaries implied between inner circle (L1), outer circle (L2), and expanding circle (EFL) have been completely broken down. The social penetration and functional domains of the language make it difficult to establish such distinctions just for the sake of geography and/or genetics of its speakers. Instead, it must be the speakers' proficiency and intelligibility that dictate their competence of language use.

The pluralisation of English led to the emergence of new Englishes which are significant in their own right and must not be looked upon as deviances, or heteronomous at best, from a hegemonic single standard, prestigious English, mainly British. How far the ecology of these new Englishes goes and the labels attached to them are beyond the scope of this study. If we are to include pidgins and creoles as suggested by Mufwene (2000) or call them old, new, or New Englishes is not the most relevant here. Instead, what is pertinent is how these new Englishes revolutionised the language, especially in its spoken form, by being adapted to accommodate the speakers' communicative needs and/or culture-specific language alternatives whilst contradicting the monolithic view of English as one unified normative authority. This is all the more obvious within the cohort targeted in this study. Amongst younger generations the written form of the language has been deemphasised while its spoken counterpart is their preferred medium of communication outside the classroom, which translates in close verbal engagement in planned or unplanned situations for immediate communication, either face to face or in technology-mediated interaction (e.g., gaming). This use of the language is addressed by James (2008) New Englishes as a Lingua Franca to highlight that they do not belong to any given speech community, nor do they extend over long periods of time. It comes, then, as no surprise that a tension between centrifugal and centripetal forces has arisen. These bipolar extremes have iconically been represented by Braj Kachru (World Englishes paradigm) and Randolph Quirk (Modern Foreign Languages paradigm). The tension developed in a parallel fashion to the language itself between the ways it should be taught and used by its speakers. Quirk calls for NS ownership rights, whose English embodies the only legitimate standard. All the other Englishes are considered subsidiary variations dependent on a norm-providing model, primarily British. Quirk's linguistic deficit perspective is vehemently disapproved by Kachru who sees them from a difference standpoint.

Kachru challenges traditional notions of standardisation and normativity offered by Quirk and his followers by considering these models valid both for teaching and use. Having the advantage that only time could give, it is possible to say that Kachru's view was right on the mark. Custody over the language is now global and not local. Yet, if the transition from centripetal to centrifugal stances has made its way inside the classroom, where teachers rule pedagogic principles and practices, is a whole different matter.

The close geographical proximity of Europe to the UK would call for its inclusion in Kachru's seminal framework of concentric circles but, contrariwise to what could be expected, it was not. Thus, I offer a more up-to-date sociolinguistic profile of English in Europe grounded in oral proficiency rather than birthplace. Kachru failed both to acknowledge and envisage the role played by English in Europe's linguistic, and to a great extent cultural, plurality. In point of fact, English steadily grew in prominence and number of speakers, surpassing all national languages and the big languages (German and French) to become the front runner within the EU's linguistic pyramid, despite the institutional language policy commitment to multilingualism and practice. English is used as an additional language for almost 40% of the population in mainland Europe. As set forth by Alison Graves, the Head of Training of Interpreters in the European Parliament, all languages amongst the EU are to be considered equal, but some are probably more equal than others. Yet, this is not to say that national languages and identities are rejected, even amongst younger generations; instead, another linguistic identity layer is added to the speakers' repertoire to use in cross-cultural intra-European communication. Whether we like it or not, the uniqueness of English's bottom-up use in mainland Europe, despite the Union's top-down language policies, made it the EU's lingua franca. English's use is negotiated daily outside identifiable speech communities by its speakers at every business meeting, parliament meeting, gaming interaction, or airport. The snippet offered by James (2000): **A** – *I don' wanna drink alcohol*. **B** – *Me too*. **C** – *I also not*, is but an infinitesimal example of such uses of the language. The point to be taken here is the mismatch between the EU's language policies of EFL, whose aim is converging to a norm-providing target model (mainly British), and the speakers extensive use of the language as ELF. The dethroning of the nativeness principle implied in EFL teaching and learning in favour of an

intelligibility principle as the yardstick for successful communication does not happen by a matter of chance. The hands-on approach required to change this state of affairs has taken too long to be put into practice, perpetuating outdated teaching paradigms that do not conform to the learner-user's present-day needs. Only in 2018 did the Council of Europe launch the CEFR-CV in an attempt to attune those needs with practical intelligibility goals for all learner-users of the language. But, if truth be told, as suggested by this study, English continues to be taught with little regard to its speakers use of the language outside the classroom, shackling them to obsolete linguistic boundaries. Change is of the essence, especially with young learner-users who are still in their process of exploring and mastering the language.

As one of the first member-states of the EU (1986), Portugal has been strongly influenced by English in such areas as commerce, culture, economy, and education. Since then, despite an incredibly old commercial and military alliance between Portugal and England, English increased exponentially in its functional uses across the country. English has become a strategic and paramount language for intra- and international communication (e.g., the tourism industry). The strong emphasis given to the language in scholarly environments is no stranger to its current status in the country. In line with the rest of the EU's member-states, in Portugal English has become the number one foreign language to be taught across schools. The upward trajectory of English in the Portuguese education system was backed up by an extensive body of language policies, which ultimately made it a compulsory subject at the beginning of the 3rd grade. But it did not stop at that. Consistent with the European trend for earlier foreign language learning, English was extended to the 1st and 2nd grades as an afterschool activity meant to privilege edutainment tasks. Yet, despite the government's good intentions to promote the language in general and the oral skills in particular, the haphazardness of these laws is easily traceable. On the one hand, for nine years the linguistic background of the learners was not taken into account nor was it sequenced in the following levels of education. On the other hand, the most recent advances of research in applied linguistics are completely overlooked. Both the targets and the subject´s core curriculum still reflect an idealised standard of the language, remaining untouched by the concept of intelligibility whilst implying the NS normativity of the CEFR, whose focus is on accuracy and accent. Notwithstanding the professed legal thrust

given to speaking, it did not, and I dare say does not, have full correspondence in the classroom. In practice speaking and its pronunciation subset continued to play a subsidiary role. For decades oral proficiency was dismissed to the advantage of grammar rules and structures, echoing English teaching methodologies (e.g., Direct Method and Audiolingualism) no longer suited to accommodate the ways in which NNS (Portuguese) learner-users approach and use the language, i.e., as a lingua franca. Despite their inborn linguistic topography, Portuguese young learner-users share much of the linguistic exposure to English of their European counterparts – RP English at school and GA English outside of it, as well as their communicational needs. They too want to be part of this new international youth culture, who shares similar preferences displayed using English. By the same token, Portuguese learner-users do not forfeit their linguistic national identity, they simply add another linguistic resource that will ease their way towards material and personal success, either for study or leisure purposes. Interaction with different youngsters from different linguistic affiliations is both instrumentally and integratively driven. It seems, then, that Portuguese teachers have as yet not found a practical way of having students speaking extensively in English. Over the years, English grew strong across the curriculum and the imbalance between speaking and the rest of the skills softened but laws per se do not have the power to change pedagogical practices inside the classroom. The challenge is for the teachers, who need to adapt, innovate, and fine-tune their teaching methodologies with intelligibly principled spoken production and/or interaction goals in mind.

Variance on the significance of speaking and teaching methodologies adopted is unquestionably connected. The more traditional the teaching practice is, the more speaking and intelligibility play second fiddle. For most of the twentieth century, FLT became fertile ground for periodic emerging teaching fads as the natural outcome of changing political, social and economic demands; of educational learners' needs (e.g., improved oral proficiency); of developments in theoretical learning findings in the fields of sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics; and of dissatisfactions felt by teachers and students. Many, lacking a sound theory, were based on their self-proclaimed founder's language teaching ideology(ies), thus sharing the common assumption of thinking of themselves as the next big thing in language teaching.

The inception of L2 teaching as we know it today can be traced back to the Grammar-translation method. Here, speaking played no part in the lessons, whose focus was on grammatical accuracy. Regrettably, echoes of such attention to form still linger in many a Portuguese classroom. I would go further to say in many a classroom across the globe. A shift in paradigm took place with the Direct Method. This teaching methodology valued TL practice over form. The Direct Method was the first attempt to have English as the frame of reference for the lesson. Indeed, the Direct Method's most noteworthy contribution to contemporary conceptualisation of FLT is the prominence given to TL use in the classroom. Due to practical limitations this method was abandoned but the stress put on TL use in the classroom did not. The role of speaking at the heart of the lesson is followed through by Audiolingualism. Mimicked and/or memorised dialogues are the method's dominant linguistic practice and most distinctive attribute, according to its most fundamental premise of error avoidance to achieve native-like proficiency. Again, I reiterate my disappointment at present practices of spoken production and/ or interaction that resonate learning procedures hardly usable outside the classroom and impossible to apply to negotiate meaning, instead of real language acquisition and consequently (spoken) language proficiency. These methods' weaknesses (e.g., massive focus on form, learning done without context, and subversion of speaking's natural characteristics), combined with an ever-growing concern with the message itself, led to the emergence of CLT[88], whose centre of attention was primarily on the communicative functions of language, thus appraising learning procedure and message as equally important. CLT offered, and continues to do so, the ample guideline of developing communicative competence by allowing learners to engage in meaningful communicative tasks. CLT was a game changer for FLT teaching. Meaning became paramount, contextualisation is a must-have, and, rather important for the scope of this study, comprehensible pronunciation is sought. Nevertheless, CLT does not go without critique. Bearing in mind the present status

[88] During this transition period, three alternative, less-commonly used methods developed outside mainstream language teaching – The Silent Way, Suggestopedia and TPR. None of the three was remarkably successful, borrowing some of Audiolingualism's features, in particular accuracy of sounds through repetition and memorisation. Yet, they should not be completely dismissed. Suggestopedia's use of games and songs as effective classroom procedures must be taken into consideration and so does Gattegno's suggestion for less teacher talk envisaged by his Silent Way.

of English worldwide, intelligible pronunciation would be a more fitting aim. Moreover, as far as intelligibility is concerned, CLT, and by the same token Dörnyei's (2009) recast – PCA, continue to anchor authentic language on the competences of monolingual English NS, thus failing to set intelligibly-based goals as the benchmark against which successful communication should be judged. In the same vein, communicative competence, regardless of its widespread dissemination and acceptance, is a concept that should be looked at with caution. CLT drew heavily on Hymes's theory of communicative competence, so unsurprisingly claims to emphasise speaking have attached themselves to the term and the frameworks which accompany it, namely that of Canale and Swain (1980). Although recognising the added value of Canale and Swain's seminal work, along with its recasts, the model implies a NS idealised linguistic and cultural standard based on a monolithic perception of what should constitute the L2 learner's expected achievement. Its appropriateness as an instructional goal for NNS in FL learning/teaching environments such as the Portuguese is highly questionable, at best. The model implies that communicative competence is a landmark for NS only. To avoid this forced inculturation on L2 learners, I advocate a reconceptualization of the concept of communicative competence, founded upon a move from communicative competence to language proficiency. As put forward by my non-Linear (Language) Proficiency Framework, spoken language proficiency, combined with intelligibility, must be the yardstick against which the learner-user's mastery is to be measured either in real-life or classroom settings.

Native-like pronunciation and proficiency achievement is not a problem restricted to learners only. The dichotomy between native and non-native EFL/ESL teachers is still very much alive because of the assumption that NS are innately better teachers. Such belief is rooted in the ideological native-speakerism position that attaches greater value to NS proficiency and from there to classroom teaching competence. The relationship between speaking a language as one's mother tongue and being able to teach it is but a figment of the ELT world grounded in Quirk's deficit linguistics myth. In a similar fashion to learners, NNS teachers must be expected to speak the language proficiently and intelligibly. Yet, this is not to say that language proficiency insufficiency does not pose a problem, especially if teaching behaviour is affected by it. If the teacher systematically favours the printed

word and frontal work over oral skills and pair/group work or if his/her linguistic command is too limited to deliver the lesson, aid students develop their own linguistic proficiency, support speaking tasks, build on and develop learners' responses, model the pronunciation of words and sentences (with intelligibility as reference), and engage in sure to happen improvisational teaching, the effectiveness of indispensable classroom teaching procedures is undermined. What is needed, then, is a safety threshold of speaking proficiency combined with an intelligible pronunciation. If this safeguard is assured, other factors (appropriate teacher training, pre-service qualifications, pedagogical ability, personality, humour, rapport with students, and the like) will dictate NNS teachers' effectiveness, just as they will for their NS counterparts. The accomplishment of any language teacher must not, then, be measured against his/her nativeness. In point of fact, NNS teachers' dual identity grants them advantages that NS teachers do not have – they provide a realistic model of L2 user for the students, have a better knowledge of the local educational system, share the students' L1, can better foresee language problems, better equip their students with language-learning strategies, and better develop awareness on the TL. By and large, it does not make sense to establish a clear-cut contrast between practitioners based on language command when so many variables are at stake to succeed as a L2 teacher. Linguistic skills on their own are not enough to transform any given individual into a knowledgeable teacher. Inside the classroom language must be meddled with to serve pedagogic purposes, i.e., to be pedagogically effective. The kind of framing and unpackaging of the (English) language that is asked to the L2 teacher is not within arm's reach just for the sake of being a NS. Outside native-speakerism ideology it seems barely adequate to think otherwise.

In view of the political-economic instability and international tensions we are presently living in, English's ubiquity can play an especially important role as a shared medium of communication to enhance mutual understanding, promote social engagement, help negotiate conflicts and work against erroneous stereotypes and prejudiced views of the other. Hence, calls for global citizenship in the twenty-first century have posited intercultural education as one of the aims of FLT, both locally (CEFR) and beyond (UNESCO). This is yet another challenge for teachers, who are now expected to prepare learners to communicate outside national

frontiers with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The latter must develop the ability to step beyond their culture and bring it into relation with different cultures, embracing those differences and acting upon them to mediate and bridge existing gaps to avoid potential communication impediments across contexts. Although the arguments in favour of interculturality have been stressed since 2001 (CEFR), in Portugal this desideratum took over a decade to pick up momentum. Intercultural awareness was explicitly integrated into the national curriculum in 2013 (targets) under the heading *Intercultural Domain*. More recently (2018), the *Intercultural Domain* has been further reinforced in the subject's core curriculum under the heading Intercultural Competence. Notwithstanding the legal thrust to foster intercultural citizenship, Portuguese EFL teachers continue to be left to their own imagination and rely only on their common sense. On the one hand, the targets' support notebook does not include the *Intercultural Domain* as an independent section on its own, thus failing to offer specific activities to address this dimension of learning. On the other hand, the targets themselves are perceived to be rather difficult to understand. Without a clear idea on what to do and how to do it, teachers tend to rely on the textbook's simplistic fragmented view of culture. More often than not, a few facts about the TL most iconic countries (mainly the UK and the USA) and some big "C" cultural trivia are offered. If we want learners to think, feel and act intercultural, we must feed them with little "c" culture. Thinking of speaking, notions of politeness and styles of communication are a must-have for the learners if they are to successfully shuttle between cultures in intended or unintended communicative situations. Language proficiency, intelligibility, and the cultural elements of the society whose language students strive to speak must be part of the classroom right from day one. Therefore, I envisage intercultural awareness as one of three intertwined dimensions, along with a linguistic and a strategic one, that together make up the learner-user's competence, which in turn cannot be set apart from proficiency and performance. As far as my view of language teaching/learning goes, it is not possible to establish relationships, manage dysfunctions, dispel biases, and act as mediator without being both proficient and intelligible, otherwise all these expected behaviours run the risk of falling by the wayside.

Speaking is unquestionably at the core of social relations irrespective of age, social status, gender and cultural or ethnical background. However, its overall nature and socio-psychological processes in ELT have mistakenly been confounded with those of writing. This written-based doctrine still observed today translates into scripted dialogues, study of grammar rules, repetition, mimicking and rehearsal. Audiolingualism's pedagogy is echoed in this way of teaching/learning the spoken language, failing to grasp that such procedures are in line with the printed word even though they may resort to orality (e.g., oral presentations). The focus on accuracy and conformity to a perceived norm-providing standard ignores the interactive social nature of speaking by focusing on the speaker only, to determine if sounds and language structures are correctly produced and capable of triggering appropriate responses in the listener or not. Everyday spoken language rarely generates these types of continuous correct complete sentences and clearly articulated words, markedly because of its time-bound nature processing conditions. Speaking is done in real-time restricting considerably the possibility to plan, edit or revise one's discourse before processing and producing it. Therefore, speakers tend to use incomplete sentences, short turns, simple interrogative structures, fillers and hesitation markers, repetitions and rephrasings, fixed conventional phrases, and a colloquial style. Moreover, if we throw into the pot as we should the close connection between age factor and speaking manner, there are a few more traits to consider. Teenagers are even more informal and use quite simple forms to express modality. Thus, it does not seem equitable or even reasonable to demand of our 9th grade learners styles of speaking that hardly, if ever, are displayed in their L1 and do not conform to their age span nor will we ever hear them from the mouths of their NS counterparts.

Spoken production and interaction must be present in the EFL classroom right from the start, not with a focus on grammar and bookish language structures but in producing real-life components of everyday spoken language like short, phrase-sized lexical chunks instead, whilst highlighting the value of reciprocity and meaning negotiation for successful communication. By and large, speaking is a two-way process between speaker and listener whereby interaction depends entirely on the cooperation of the two parties. Each interlocutor is concurrently speaker and listener, sharing responsibilities on both the interaction´s success and intended

outcomes. To ensure mutual intelligibility, not only has the speaker to phonologically adjust to his/her listener, but also has the listener to engage with the speaker's message, either by showing understanding or misunderstanding, sometimes a head nod suffices. If we fail to grasp the social and situational speaking traits our learners will encounter in their daily lives, we will remain confined to the narrow interpretation of ELT that Seedhouse (1996) speaks of based on elicitation patterns whose main goal is to teach and assess grammar, whilst further reinforcing the prevailing asymmetry in speaking time between teachers and learners. Restricted opportunities for learners to participate and explore their own knowledge of the language inevitably leads to worsen spoken language proficiency and intelligibility.

Classroom talk pays little attention to the interpersonal nature of speaking, favouring its transactional nature. This type of message-oriented interaction is characteristic of most EFL classrooms in which the teacher is the holder of the information to be passed on to the learner, who in turn is expected to learn it and display its acquisition at a future time in formal assessment occasions. However, assessment has been erroneously collocated with testing. Tests are but one of the many methods available to assess learners' oral use of the language. These are norm-referenced instruments applied with a grading purpose in mind which offer limited information to identify areas for improvement because they tend to be "one-off" events of speaking proficiency, failing to account for the progress made by the learners based on their performance. For its part, assessment is a criterion-referenced measurement operated in a systematic way to monitor learners' strengths and weaknesses with the purpose of building on strong points and improving weak spots. The question is not how much learning takes place but instead how well is it learnt and what can be done to help surpass transient difficulties.

The narrow view of assessment as synonymous of testing, and thus the grading function, has largely contributed to the dominance of summative assessment over formative assessment. It became a widely accepted practice inside the classroom associated with the level of attainment of specific items covered by the curriculum. In this vein, assessment is carried out not to support learning, but

by grading tests that do not usually provide useful information feedback. The negative effects of summative assessment take its toll on learners too. Portuguese learners, in the same way as many other similar EFL contexts, concentrate on memorising and recalling details they soon forget. For speaking this means memorising and reciting oral presentations or acting out theatre-like scripted dialogues. Learners are motivated by the demands of assessment rather than learning. Linguistic competence is over-emphasised whilst linguistic performance is under-emphasised. To turn the tables on this state of affairs grading outcomes ought to become subsidiary to learning outcomes, i.e., assessment must be aligned with learning. Learning-oriented approaches to speaking should not be concerned only with measuring performance, but also with actual learning of pronunciation (segmental and suprasegmental aspects) to improve intelligibility, vocabulary, language functions, register, turn-taking, and breakdowns compensation. Thus, teachers must make sure that learning/assessment tasks are representative of spontaneous, real-life spoken interaction and target the speaking skills learners will have to bring into play as users. The collection and interpretation of a variety of speech samples over time will allow teachers to trace the learners' trajectory of learning and provide timely feedback, opening up the possibility to bridge the gap between their future needs and their present state of spoken proficiency. The vital point when discussing (speaking) assessment is making sure it reflects instruction (frequent opportunities to engage extensively with the language), supports learning, and is meaningful for learners.

The asymmetry alluded above between teachers and learners' speaking time, besides hindering the assessment of the learning trajectory, exacerbates yet another problem commonly identifiable in many an EFL classroom – speaking anxiety. It is a vicious cycle difficult to break. Having to express and take risks in the TL is extremely intimidating for most learners. The less opportunities they have to take the floor, the less confident they feel. The less confident they feel, the less they are willing to speak. Anxiety negatively affects most spoken language processes (conceptualization, formulation, and articulation). The outcome ranges from complete avoidance of speaking, awkward smiles or head nods, to single word answers. Spoken language anxiety is no longer a problem circumscribed to learners in their late teens and early adulthood. Nowadays, young learners also face

developmental concerns and/or identity issues, worrying plenty about their peers' reactions to what they do both outside and inside the classroom. Bearing in mind current processes of socialisation for younger generations, it is safe to say that concerns around the self- (self-esteem, self-worth, self-confidence, and self-efficacy) are as sensitive to lower-secondary students as to their older counterparts. Thus, two aspects deserve serious thought from the teachers. First, being uncommunicative is not always synonymous with not being proficient. Sometimes this is a matter of being afraid to make mistakes in front of peers and potentially be subjected to mockery or laughter, and frustration caused by the self-perceived low ability of expressing oneself clearly, when compared to more fluent peers, in the same way as using one's mother tongue. Second, it is exceedingly important to encourage learners to speak while fostering a safe classroom environment. Teachers should be patient, friendly, whenever possible show a good sense of humour, very importantly accept mistakes as a natural part of the language learning process, design activities conducive to success, dispel learners' negative beliefs, and enhance bonds of trust between peers, as well as with themselves. Feeling safe in the classroom leads to low affective filters, which in turn promote involvement with the language acquisition process by negotiating input and producing intelligible output. Whether we are aware of it or not, speaking anxiety is an ever-present phenomenon in the language classroom. The influence of this emotional state over the learners' cognitive ability to engage with speaking can develop into an enduring problem with severe pedagogical consequences if not acknowledged and approached effectively.

Daily, learners find such relaxed environments outside the classroom. Thanks largely to technology, opportunities to use the TL, especially in its spoken form, are at the distance of a laptop and a few mouse clicks. Learners have the possibility to use the language without being constantly judged by their teachers or under the scrutiny of their peers. Out-of-class pastime activities (gaming, music, cinema, sports, and the like) offer a variety of spoken language affordances to be acted upon by the learners hardly mimicable inside the classroom. Through bottom-up language learning processes learners, depending on motivation, learning resources, and learning skills, tend to develop their speaking proficiency and intelligibility because they have to use English as the medium of interaction. Inevitably, vocabulary, pronunciation, turn-taking, language functions, fluency, and

confidence to speak are significantly boosted. Despite the challenges it poses to establish the necessary connection between out-of-class learning with in-class learning, teachers should, then, acknowledge and embrace the changes taking place outside the school premises and take advantage of learner-users' L2 linguistic background. Nowadays, spoken language interaction is likely to occur in many contexts beyond the classroom, whose relevance for the learners is far greater than the one afforded in the formal curriculum. Traditional views over the classroom, and thus the teacher, as the only source of meaningful language input is clearly outdated and misplaced. Classroom-based learning and informal learning are two sides of the same coin. They belong together and complement each other.

The more proficient and intelligible an L2 speaker is, the less likely he will mispronounce, the faster he will process speech and the easier he will select and sequence the necessary elements for his message. If proficiency is a rather consensual aim for FL teaching, intelligibility still moves on shaky ground despite being considered a far more realistic aim for most language learner-users. Native-like accuracy pronunciation expectations continue to be the norm rather than the exception. As it happens, these expectations were till very recently overtly sanctioned by the CEFR, whose interpretation of intelligibility complied with NS standards. In the globalised world we live in, where NNS account for almost 80 per cent of all spoken interaction in English, the hegemony of native-like models seems debatable, at best. The CEFR does not reflect the spread of English worldwide nor does it concede equal language use rights for all its speakers. The Council of Europe's attempt to make amends with the past came about in 2018 when the CEFR-CV was launched. The 2001 descriptors were replaced and updated to accommodate a World Englishes framework.

From 2018 onwards, intelligibility became the primary construct in the phonological dimension of spoken language. However, it is still the normativity of the CEFR based on traditional structural approaches to teaching EFL which targeted native-like accuracy instead of the acceptance of new Englishes and intelligibility goals hinted by the CEFR-CV that rules many a classroom. Portugal is no exception. To add to the confusion, the definition offered for intelligibility is ill-defined, conflating two related dimensions into one. If truth be told, a broad agreement on

the terminologies and definitions of intelligibility has not been reached yet. Throughout literature, the lexical ambiguity of intelligibility makes it difficult to discern what is exactly meant by its use. On this account, a definition for general intelligibility was offered. As a two-way process between speaker(s) and listener(s), together with the spoken interactional context of situation, who share equal responsibilities when interacting with one another, general intelligibility would then comprise three interrelated components: intelligibility (in its narrow sense) – the amount of utterance identified by the listener; difficulty – the listener's perceived estimate of how hard it is to identify an utterance; and comprehensibility – the understanding of meaning attached to utterances by the listener. In a similar fashion to intelligibility's lack of common ground, the factors that affect it the most are also hotly disputed amongst educational scholars. At the far end extremes, some advocate for the pivotal role of suprasegmental features for intelligibility while others do so in favour of segmental features. In-between, there are those who point to the influence of suprasegmental and segmental features on intelligibility as being attached to listeners and speakers' ingredients, respectively.

It is, then, pointless to try to establish a hierarchy between phonology and phonetics, as both may impair intelligibility and, therefore, spoken interaction. The context of situation, along with the interlocutors will determine the factors affecting intelligibility the most in any given communicative situation. So, what is needed is a move from outdated aims which do not serve the learners' present-day needs while supporting them as intelligible ELF users in the real-world. With a few adjustments to accommodate Portuguese reality, bearing in mind the (di)ssimiliarities of English and Portuguese's phonological systems (for example, the inclusion of digraphs as core features for intelligibility), Jenkins's (2002) LFC can be a good starting point to set pronunciation priorities in the EFL classroom. Intelligibility in its narrow sense is decisive for communicative success or failure. If one cannot map productive and receptive words and/or utterances onto one's phonological inventories interaction is doomed to fail. Thus, intelligibility should be the criterion against which new educational and social expectations are met.

My views and beliefs about how I perceive and frame the problem not only impinged on the study's research questions but also on the choices made to conduct

the research. Denying one-sided allegiance to any given philosophical system or unified reality rooted in the qualitative-quantitative rivalry of (post)positivist and constructivist paradigms and the way they saw the world, the pragmatic paradigm was appointed to govern the study considering its ontological, epistemological, and axiological broad precepts. Pragmatism appraises theories based on their utility to solve problems and help researchers succeed in dealing with significant difficulties throughout their inquiries, thus rejecting the notion that scientific inquiry must be grounded in antecedent facts and/or evidence but rather be judged by its problem-solving consequences.

The emphasis of this study was to understand, document, and analyse the teaching and learning dynamics of speaking and its intelligibility subset resorting to all approaches reckoned fitted to answer the research questions. Methods are but a means to an end. This holds even truer if we think of the inherent complexity of the FL classroom, which requires to be looked at from different angles. I believe that uncovering these complexities with qualitative engagement alone, typical of classroom research, would have fallen short of the desired outcome. In such sites clear-cut dichotomies between qualitative and quantitative research must be avoided as they are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, mixing both offers added value to researchers by allowing them to move back and forth the research continuum according to their needs, opening the door to capture the duality between quantitative objectivity and qualitative subjectivity and context-dependent knowledge and generalised knowledge. On the one hand, being either completely objective or subjective is hardly achievable for any researcher, whilst on the other hand research results are never so context-dependent that they have no implications for other settings, nor are they so generalisable that may apply to every single setting. So, to better understand my research problem I drew on a mixed methods research approach. The core of the research methodology was qualitatively driven, being supplemented by a quantitative method. The study's methodology is represented as QUAL + quan, reflecting the weight assigned to the contribution of each of the data collection methods (classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, audio recordings, and questionnaires). Notwithstanding their different nature and sample size both forms of data collection tackled the same concepts, i.e., speaking and intelligibility. Variation in sample size was never deemed an issue

because one of the aims was to combine micro and macro perspectives of the phenomenon.

For a fuller understanding of the research problem, data was analysed through a side-by-side comparison of the two databases by reporting the quantitative findings, then the qualitative findings and finally comparing within a discussion if they converged or instead displayed divergent results. To extend the breadth of the findings on the teaching and learning of speaking and its pronunciation subset (intelligibility), data was collected through a variety of instruments – classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, audio recordings, and questionnaires. These were considered the best suited to serve the interests of my research questions, the environment where they could be answered, and the soundness of the claims put forward throughout. This combination of qualitative and quantitative methods allowed methodological triangulation and taking advantage of each method's strengths while compensating for their limitations. As I see it, different combinations could irretrievably misrepresent the data gathered to answer the study's research questions.

To give the necessary time for an in-depth analysis of the target groups and the context they operate in, the study uses inductive reasoning embedded in a case study approach. The adoption of a case study took into consideration not only the pedagogic centeredness heart of the research but also the need to close the gap, usually found in the field of applied linguistics, between research findings and classroom practice, researchers and classroom teachers who feel that science writing has little in common with either themselves or their workplace. The essence of the case study is its real-life context bound nature. A clear-cut line cannot be drawn between the people that make-up the *case* and their natural surroundings, otherwise the case study's full potential to inform is not reached. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine studying the approach to speaking and intelligibility in the classroom meaningfully, set apart from the context where it naturally occurs. Only in the classroom was it possible. With this rationale in mind, a detailed examination of the unit of analysis was made at regular intervals (weekly) over the course of a school year to understand Portuguese EFL practitioners' procedures on speaking and its intelligibility subset, considering that, while diverse, the context in which EFL

is delivered in Portuguese classrooms is broadly homogenous. So, the type of case study selected was an instrumental one and the sampling strategy design was typical. The *case* was meant to provide a deep and accurate understanding of oral proficiency in the classroom while allowing to answer the research questions. The focus was on the issue of speaking and intelligibility, the *case* was germane inasmuch as to illustrate it. In the same vein, the participants encapsulate what may be considered typical in Portuguese EFL classrooms in what concerns the approach to oral proficiency, i.e., the findings were likely to reflect what is normal. The goal was to identify key aspects of the dimension of interest as they manifested under everyday classroom conditions. Even though issues of generalisability may arise on the grounds of design choices that was never a concern. Studying a classroom will always have, at least in some way, a wider resonance, contributing to a better understanding of other classrooms. It is up to other teachers to decide if: a) the data gathered has no implications for their own setting, and b) the findings will help them tackle the speaking challenges they have to face.

Grounded in these methodological foundations, the evidence collected from the qualitative and quantitative methods that inform and underlie the research procedure was reported to give an account of the complex nature of real Portuguese language learning classrooms with real learners and real teachers by answering the study's central questions:

- How are speaking and intelligibility being addressed in Portugal's L2 classrooms?
- Are speaking and intelligibility truly a neglected party in the Portuguese EFL classroom?
- If so, "How should learners be expected/required to develop their ability to [speak and] pronounce a language?" (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 153)

A thorough search across databases to find conflicting evidence germane to the research questions was made, yet no substantive rival patterns were found.

In reviewing the set of available data for research question number one, speaking and pronunciation practice does not offer much promise. By and large, extensive speaking occurs mainly as the spin-off of assessment events. Most

activities and/or tasks implemented reflect assessment demands instead of catering to the learners' needs whilst involving a wealth of planning in advance, memorisation, and rehearsal. As a result of such procedures, functions and structures regularly arise with atypical frequency, utterances are exceedingly short and exaggeratedly well-formed; backchannel responses, discourse markers and colloquial expressions are seldom used, and a shared knowledge of context is not assumed. Ingrained in the EFL classroom is a written-based orthodoxy reminiscent of a long writing tradition of teaching and learning which persists to view spoken writing as speech. Oral practice is not part of normal lessons. Many learners are far from speaking the language in a regular manner. Amongst themselves they use their L1 for almost all their interactions, whereas they do use English with the teacher but in an extremely limited fashion. Pronunciation, and thus intelligibility, falls even farther behind. Despite the perceived importance attributed to pronunciation by some teachers, a properly functioning pronunciation practice approach is entirely dismissed. The lion's share of self-reported pronunciation activities goes to listen and repeat but in truth this was limited to the occasional correction and feedback, done on the spur of the moment and not on a regular basis to address potential intelligibility problems. A strong emphasis continues to be attributed to other subsets, in particular grammar. I would say that complications arise from the gap between research in English language teaching methodology and the classroom. De Jong's et al. (2012) study on the componential structure of L2 speaking proficiency clearly indicates pronunciation as the subset to contribute the most to overall ability for low proficiency scores. Contrariwise to what should be the rule, teachers do not draw strength from integrating research into their daily practices. As I see it, this is a challenge to be taken seriously in contemporary FL education. Often academic articles are read only by a selected few, failing to reach a broader audience, i.e., teachers. The goal must be the connection between academic research and the ways it can be used in the real world of the classroom. "Teachers need knowledge of the most recent advances in research for the subjects they teach. In addition, they need to be familiar with the newest research on how something can be taught and learned" (Niemi, 2005, p. 7). For now, the focus of instruction is still determined by the textbook. Speaking and intelligibility are being addressed unsystematically.

In line with speaking and pronunciation practice, data collected for research question number two confirms the claim that intelligibility is still a marginalized concept whose positive correlation with the learner-user's spoken proficiency is yet to be fully understood. The majority of Portuguese EFL teachers are not familiar with the new CEFR – CV and even fewer with its phonological descriptors. It is the original CEFR instead that resonates amongst them the most, inevitably leading to the adoption of an idealised NS norm, whose focus is usually on grammatical accuracy and accent. The aim of putting the focus on intelligibility as the primary construct in phonological control seems to lie far down the road and with it the much-needed awareness that intelligibility in its narrow sense is decisive to map productive and receptive words and/or utterances onto the learner-user's phonological inventory. Otherwise, it is impossible to attach any meaning whatsoever to what is being said or heard. Teaching methodologies and learning paradigms are divorced from the learner-user's spoken sociolinguistic world he/she inhabits. At best Portuguese EFL learners have the opportunity to improve their intelligibility for a class or two every single school year. This is but a drop in the ocean of spoken language proficiency. Intelligibility's neglect rests on three interrelated circumstances: a) the Council of Europe's tardy response to the global development of different Englishes and the poor publicising of the CEFR – CV amongst teachers across Europe, letting to chance the knowledge or not of the phonological changes made; b) the deficient guidelines offered by the Portuguese Ministry of Education, which failed to take into account the CEFR – CV but the CEFR in its place, acting as gatekeeper of the nativeness principle instead of welcoming an intelligibility one; and c) the teachers' own perceptions on intelligibility. If they do not recognize the significance of intelligibility for their learners as ELF users of situational speaking communities their teaching methodology is unlikely to change.

For its part, speaking is not much better than intelligibility. Despite the perceived importance attributed to speaking it is the least practiced student modality, clearly lagging behind listening, reading, and especially writing in number of lessons allocated to its development on its own and/or in combination. Systematically, speaking has a subordinate role when compared to the rest of the skills. Apart from the odd exception, opportunities for the learner-users to speak and interact extensively in English are limited to assessment events, making

speaking practice deficient in number, and fragmented in method. Teachers claims to pay so little attention to speaking mostly concern lack of time. Although recognising the problem, it is perhaps too short of a justification to account for the wide mismatch between the significance assigned to speaking and the amount of time allotted to it. I must reiterate my belief that some teachers just want to play it safe while others lack the will to do so because speaking is the most challenging skill for the learners but also for the teachers. It cannot fall back on the textbook as much, it is more laborious due to the learners' proficiency heterogeneity, and it is more difficult to manage from a behavioural point of view. Speaking is still to find a fitting position amongst teachers and their classrooms. To add to the predicament, even when speaking is part of normal lessons it does not necessarily translate into more extensive use of the language. Unfortunately, the impact of the former on the latter is not guaranteed. Collateral, but nonetheless important, reasons such as speaking language anxiety impinge the learners' willingness to communicate. The vicious cycle alluded above is certainly no stranger to this recurrent attitude among EFL learners. Without opportunities to produce extensive chunks of spoken language only a marginal number of learners becomes the independent users (B1/B1+) they ought to be at the end of the 9th grade. Altogether, speaking is not approached methodically in the Portuguese EFL classroom. The bias in favour of accuracy over fluency, form over meaning, and grammar rules over language in use is still incredibly alive.

Out of this state of affairs, research question number three naturally presents itself, gaining even more meaning when research question number two was confirmed by the available sets of data. The CEFR (2001) offers a rather straightforward answer in the form of activities anchored in the Modern Foreign Languages paradigm. For speaking these may be:

> written texts read aloud; oral answers to exercise questions; reproduction of memorised texts (plays, poems, etc.); pair and group work exercises; contributions to formal and informal discussion; free conversation (in class or during pupil exchanges); [and] presentations.

Whilst for pronunciation these may be:

> simply by exposure to authentic spoken utterances; by chorused imitation of i) the teacher, ii) audio-recorded native speakers, iii) video-recorded native speakers; by individualised language laboratory work; by reading aloud phonetically weighted textual material; by ear-training and phonetic drilling; […] by explicit phonetic training; by learning orthoepic conventions (i.e. how to pronounce written forms); by some combination of the above (pp. 146-153).

Yet the answer cannot be feeding teachers with prospective classroom activities. At least for speaking, data shows that some of the above are already put into practice on occasion. Routinely, teachers opt for oral presentations, role-plays, and description tasks but with an assessment frame of mind, involving plenty of memorisation and rehearsal. As for pronunciation, teachers either dismiss it completely or are drawn to centripetal language teaching forces which translates in correction and feedback under the false appearance of listen and repeat. As it stands, the type of input practised in many Portuguese classrooms does not generate sufficient oral proficiency skills for the learner-user's future needs. Taking into account English's non-phonemic trait and the learners' reduced autonomy to engage with the language outside the classroom without the help and instruction of their teachers, only a selected few will stand out from the pack and be successful intelligible speakers. It is imperative that class time is wisely spent to optimise intelligibility, and thus spoken language proficiency. First and foremost, regular oral practice must occur, or else all the stakeholders cannot expect/require from the learners the ability to speak the language proficiently and pronounce it intelligibly. With this foundation dug deep in the classroom's procedures, the second step is acknowledging how determinant intelligibility in its narrow sense can be for communicative success or failure in and outside the classroom. Either as EFL learner or ELF user, if one cannot map productive and receptive words and/or utterances onto one's phonological inventories, attaching any meaning to what is being said or heard, grasping intentions, or managing communicative dysfunctions is virtually impossible. Lastly, if we genuinely want learners to develop their ability to speak and pronounce the language, we ought to let them speak. The aim should be less teacher talk while boosting the learners' willingness to initiate sustained discourse

and interact in the TL beyond narrow range topics by taking advantage of their integrative oriented motivation.

May it be due to governmental policies, teachers' attitudes and/or perceptions, pressure of assessment, pressure to achieve success percentages projected by school boards, or practical challenges felt every day in the field (e.g., class size and class heterogeneity), speaking and intelligibility fall through the cracks of the Portuguese EFL classroom when in fact speaking the language proficiently and intelligibly should be the main goal for our learner-users. Language is a spoken phenomenon. Hopefully, the knowledge produced here will positively impact on future EFL classroom procedures, bestowing upon the oral skills the prominence they deserve. Indeed, if we are to align EFL teaching and learning with the skills for 2030[89] envisaged by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for education, namely the ability to communicate with ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse people, we must give speaking and intelligibility the impetus they so desperately need. I would go further to say that they must be given priority, otherwise most of our learner-users will not be able to achieve such a goal by 2030. As pointed out in section II. 4, without being both orally proficient and intelligible it is not possible to establish relationships, manage dysfunctions, and act as a mediator. In addition, as a social skill, speaking also influences the learners' cognitive and metacognitive skills. Sharing their creativity (innovation), critical thinking (questioning and evaluating ideas), or problem-solving solutions is dependent upon speaking English proficiently and intelligibly. In four years' time, it will be rather interesting to compare the 2025 Programme for International Student Assessment's (PISA) findings (country-specific overviews) with that of this study. As suggested by the title of the report that provides the framework used to guide the PISA 2025 Foreign Language Assessment – *What matters for Language Learning?* (Marconi, Cascales, Covacevich, & Halgreen, 2020), foreign language skills will be assessed on a global scale. For the first time there will be a specific focus on EFL teaching and learning aimed at assessing 15-year-old learners' proficiency. Bearing in mind the scope of this study and the fact that the cohort targeted is the same, I am particularly interested in construct 32 – Teaching

[89] Information available at http://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/ under the heading OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030.

the four communicative skills, which refers “to the frequency of and amount of classroom time dedicated to teaching students to use the four communicative skills of speaking, writing, reading and listening” by measuring “the recurrence and amount of time accorded to the use of each […] by itself or in combination with others” (Marconi, Cascales, Covacevich, & Halgreen, 2020, p. 45), and construct 33 – Teaching linguistic knowledge, which refers “to the frequency of and amount of time dedicated in the classroom to teaching structural aspects of the target language” (ibid.), such as pronunciation. Desirably, the meta-inferences drawn from the available data will be acknowledged and responded to and my hopes for a positive impact on future EFL classroom procedures towards spoken proficiency and intelligibility will manifest in 2025 and establish firmly by 2030.

Linguistic Glossary

The terms listed below cover the main areas of Linguistics (phonetics, phonology, semantics, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics) addressed in the main text.

Acrolect – Variety of a language with highest prestige or closest to the superstrate (especially referring to Creoles).

Allophone – one of multiple possible realisations of the same phoneme.

Backchannel – Minimal response (usually no more than a word) used to signal that the listener continues to pay attention. E.g., "uh-huh", "hmm", "right", etc.

Basilect – Variety of a language with lowest prestige or maximally distant to the superstrate (opposite of acrolect).

Cluster – Sequence of adjacent consonants with no intervening vowel.

Code-mixing – Mixing of two or more languages in a conversation, within a sentence or between sentences.

Code-switching – Alternate use of two or more languages in a conversation, within a sentence or between sentences.

Creole – A language believed to be an expansion of Pidgin in structure and vocabulary, serving a range of functions required to constitute as a first language. Creoles have NS.

Diglossia – Use of two distinct forms of the same language in different contexts by a community.

Disfluency – Departure from the regular flow of speech, which frequently spring from delays (pauses, hesitations) in language production.

Endonormative – Use of the language relying on local norms as standards.

Englishization – The effect of English on local languages (processes of word borrowing or grammar structure adoption).

Exonormative – Use of the language relying on foreign norms as standards.

Glocal – Neologism used to reflect both global and local considerations, in this case of a language.

Hedge – Word or phrase that conveys imprecision, overprecise commitment or a mitigation effect to lessen the impact of an utterance on the listener.

Insert – Cover term for words (e.g., interjections, greetings/farewells, discourse markers) used mainly to convey interactive meanings.

Intonation – Variation in pitch of an utterance, as for signalling the difference between statements and questions.

Loan-translation – Type of borrowing based on a direct translation from one language to the other (also known as calque). E.g., English *Superman* from German *Übermench*.

Nativisation – The effect of local languages on English (adapting a loan word or a phonetic structure).

Phoneme – The smallest unit of a language used to distinguish one word from another.

Pidgin – Simple form of language developed through contact between groups of speakers who do not share a common language. Thus, a pidgin is no one's native language, initially.

Pitch – Degree of highness or lowness of a tone.

Prosody – Cover term to refer collectively to stress, intonation and rhythm.

Repair – Utterance in a conversation (commonly a repetition) to introduce some kind of correction to what has been said.

Schwa – Mid central vowel mainly used in unstressed positions.

Stance – Overt expression of the way that the speakers position themselves towards the content of the conversation during an interaction.

Substrate – Less dominant language in a multilingual society. Yet it may influence the superstrate.

Superstrate – Dominant language in a multilingual society, which affects the substrate.

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Appendices

Appendix A – The International Phonetic Alphabet (revised to 2018)

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC) © 2018 IPA

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k g	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	B			r					R		
Tap or Flap		ⱱ		ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Symbols to the right in a cell are voiced, to the left are voiceless. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

CONSONANTS (NON-PULMONIC)

Clicks	Voiced implosives	Ejectives
ʘ Bilabial	ɓ Bilabial	’ Examples:
ǀ Dental	ɗ Dental/alveolar	pʼ Bilabial
ǃ (Post)alveolar	ʄ Palatal	tʼ Dental/alveolar
ǂ Palatoalveolar	ɠ Velar	kʼ Velar
ǁ Alveolar lateral	ʛ Uvular	sʼ Alveolar fricative

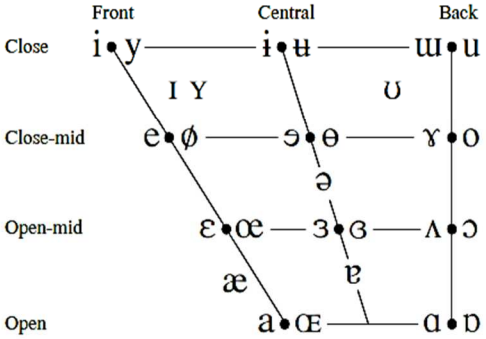
OTHER SYMBOLS

ʍ Voiceless labial-velar fricative
ɕ ʑ Alveolo-palatal fricatives
w Voiced labial-velar approximant
ɺ Voiced alveolar lateral flap
ɥ Voiced labial-palatal approximant
ʢ Simultaneous ʃ and x
ʜ Voiceless epiglottal fricative
ʡ Voiced epiglottal fricative
ʡ Epiglottal plosive

Affricates and double articulations can be represented by two symbols joined by a tie bar if necessary.

t͡s k͡p

VOWELS



Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a rounded vowel.

SUPRASEGMENTALS

ˈ Primary stress ˌfoʊnəˈtɪʃən
ˌ Secondary stress
ː Long eː
ˑ Half-long eˑ
˘ Extra-short ĕ
| Minor (foot) group
‖ Major (intonation) group
. Syllable break ɹi.ækt
‿ Linking (absence of a break)

TONES AND WORD ACCENTS

LEVEL		CONTOUR	
e̋ or ˥	Extra high	ě or ˩˥	Rising
é ˦	High	ê ˥˩	Falling
ē ˧	Mid	e᷄ ˦˥	High rising
è ˨	Low	e᷅ ˩˧	Low rising
ȅ ˩	Extra low	e᷈ ˩˥˩	Rising-falling
↓	Downstep	↗	Global rise
↑	Upstep	↘	Global fall

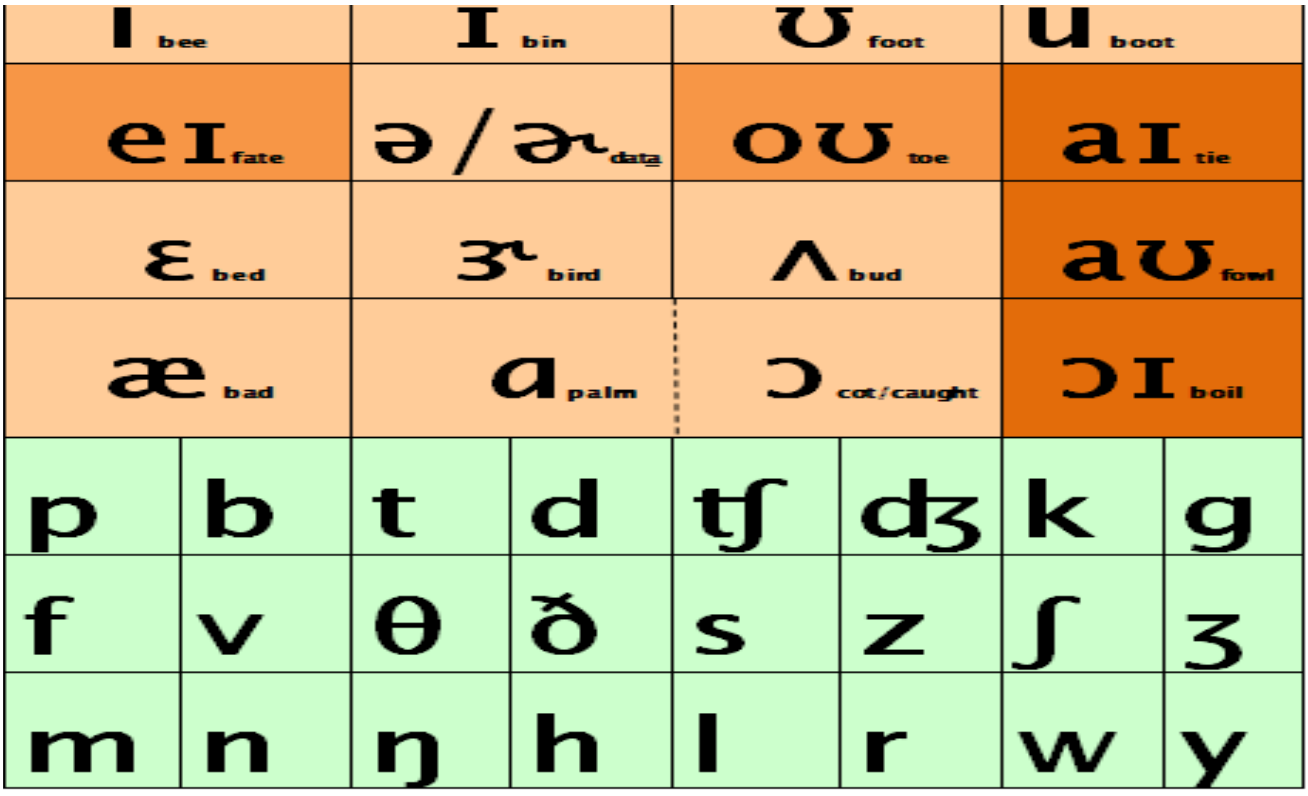
DIACRITICS Some diacritics may be placed above a symbol with a descender, e.g. n̥ŋ̊

◌̥ Voiceless	n̥ d̥	◌̤ Breathy voiced	b̤ a̤	◌̪ Dental	t̪ d̪
◌̬ Voiced	s̬ t̬	◌̰ Creaky voiced	b̰ a̰	◌̺ Apical	t̺ d̺
◌ʰ Aspirated	tʰ dʰ	◌̼ Linguolabial	t̼ d̼	◌̻ Laminal	t̻ d̻
◌̹ More rounded	ɔ̹	◌ʷ Labialized	tʷ dʷ	◌̃ Nasalized	ẽ
◌̜ Less rounded	ɔ̜	◌ʲ Palatalized	tʲ dʲ	◌ⁿ Nasal release	dⁿ
◌̟ Advanced	u̟	◌ˠ Velarized	tˠ dˠ	◌ˡ Lateral release	dˡ
◌̠ Retracted	e̠	◌ˤ Pharyngealized	tˤ dˤ	◌̚ No audible release	d̚
◌̈ Centralized	ë	~ Velarized or pharyngealized	ɫ		
◌̽ Mid-centralized	e̽	◌̝ Raised	e̝ (ɪ̝ = voiced alveolar fricative)		
◌̩ Syllabic	n̩	◌̞ Lowered	e̞ (β̞ = voiced bilabial approximant)		
◌̯ Non-syllabic	e̯	◌̘ Advanced Tongue Root	e̘		
◌˞ Rhoticity	ə˞ a˞	◌̙ Retracted Tongue Root	e̙		

Appendix B – British and American English Phonemic Charts

	monophthongs				diphthongs			
VOWELS	iː sheep	ɪ ship	ʊ good	uː shoot	ɪə here	eɪ wait		
	e bed	ə teacher	ɜː bird	ɔː door	ʊə tourist	ɔɪ boy	əʊ show	
	æ cat	ʌ up	ɑː far	ɒ on	eə hair	aɪ my	aʊ cow	
CONSONANTS	p pea	b boat	t tea	d dog	ʧ cheese	ʤ June	k car	g go
	f fly	v video	θ think	ð this	s see	z zoo	ʃ shall	ʒ television
	m man	n now	ŋ sing	h hat	l love	r red	w wet	j yes

Phonemic Chart
voiced
unvoiced



Phonemic chart for North American English

	Consonants
	Pure vowels
	Homogeneous diphthongs
	Heterogeneous diphthongs

Appendix C – List of Changes to Specific 2001 CEFR Descriptors[90]

OVERALL LISTENING COMPREHENSION	
C2	Can understand with ease virtually ~~Has no difficulty with~~ any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, delivered at fast ~~native~~ natural speed.
UNDERSTANDING CONVERSATION BETWEEN OTHER ~~NATIVE~~ SPEAKERS	
B2+	Can keep up with an animated conversation between ~~native~~ speakers of the target language.
B2	Can with some effort catch much of what is said around him/her, but may find it difficult to participate effectively in discussion with several ~~native~~ speakers of the target language who do not modify their ~~language~~ speech in any way.
LISTENING AS A MEMBER OF A LIVE AUDIENCE	
C2	Can follow specialised lectures and presentations employing ~~a high degree of~~ colloquialism, regional usage or unfamiliar terminology.
OVERALL READING COMPREHENSION	
C2	Can understand ~~and interpret critically~~ virtually all forms of the written language including abstract, structurally complex, or highly colloquial literary and non-literary writings.
OVERALL SPOKEN INTERACTION	
B2	Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction, and sustained relationships with speakers of the target language ~~native speakers~~ quite possible without imposing strain on either party. Can highlight the personal significance of events and experiences, account for and sustain views clearly by providing relevant explanations and arguments.
UNDERSTANDING ~~A NATIVE SPEAKER~~ AN INTERLOCUTOR	
C2	Can understand any ~~native speaker~~ interlocutor, even on abstract and complex topics of a specialist nature beyond his/her own field, given an opportunity to adjust to a ~~non-standard~~ less familiar accent ~~or dialect~~.
CONVERSATION	
B2	Can sustain relationships with speakers of the target language ~~native speakers~~ without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with another ~~native~~ proficient speaker.
INFORMAL DISCUSSION (WITH FRIENDS)	
B2+	Can keep up with an animated discussion between ~~native~~ speakers of the target language.
B2	Can with some effort catch much of what is said around him/her in discussion, but may find it difficult to participate effectively in discussion with several ~~native~~ speakers of the target language who do not modify their ~~language~~ speech in any way.
FORMAL DISCUSSION (MEETINGS)	
C2	Can hold his/her own in formal discussion of complex issues, putting an articulate and persuasive argument, at no disadvantage to ~~native~~ other speakers.
INTERVIEWING AND BEING INTERVIEWED	
C2	Can keep up his/her side of the dialogue extremely well, structuring the talk and interacting authoritatively with ~~complete~~ effortless fluency as interviewer or interviewee, at no disadvantage to ~~native~~ other speakers.
SOCIOLINGUISTIC APPROPRIATENESS	
C2	Can mediate effectively and naturally between speakers of the target language and of his/her own community ~~of origin~~, taking account of sociocultural and sociolinguistic differences.
C2	Appreciates virtually all the sociolinguistic and sociocultural implications of language used by ~~native~~ proficient speakers of the target language and can react accordingly.
B2	Can sustain relationships with speakers of the target language ~~native speakers~~ without unintentionally amusing or irritating them or requiring them to behave other than they would with another ~~native~~ proficient speaker.
SPOKEN FLUENCY	
B2	Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with speakers of the target language ~~native speakers~~ quite possible without imposing strain on either party.

[90] Taken from the CEFR – CV (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 223).

Appendix D – Headmistress's Written Informed Consent

Autorização de Realização de Estudo

O Agrupamento de Escolas ---------- autoriza a realização nas suas instalações do desenvolvimento do estudo de doutoramento intitulado "*Can We Speak? – Approaching Oral Proficiency in the EFL Classroom*", no âmbito da Didática da Língua Estrangeira, que tem como responsável o doutorando Rúben Constantino Correia, sob a orientação do Professor Doutor Carlos Ceia.

O estudo tem por objetivo identificar as práticas atuais de promoção da oralidade por parte dos professores, bem como o uso da língua inglesa na sua modalidade oral por parte dos alunos. Isto, tendo por base o conceito de inteligibilidade. A informação recolhida, através da observação de aulas a alunos de inglês do 9º ano e entrevistas aos respetivos docentes, permitirão uma melhor compreensão do fenómeno estudado e, espera-se, uma transferência de conhecimento que possa beneficiar todos os intervenientes. Os dados obtidos serão tratados de acordo com a lei em vigor e utilizados exclusivamente com fins de investigação científica.

Data _____

_____

Nome da representante legal da Instituição

_____

Assinatura da representante legal da Instituição

Appendix E – Teachers' Written Informed Consent

Informed Consent

PhD Research Study Entitled

"*Can We Speak? – Approaching Oral Proficiency in the EFL Classroom*"

Aim: To study and identify current communicative teaching practices amongst Portuguese EFL teachers, as well as the students' use of the English language in its oral form, having intelligibility as benchmark.

Procedure: The researcher will observe one lesson, of the teacher's choice, every week, recording all aspects considered significant to the aim of the study in writing and audio. At the end of the school year the teacher is interviewed by the researcher.

Risk: There are no risks associated with participating in this study.

Benefit: The data collected will contribute to increase knowledge about speaking's teaching-learning process in classroom environments, thus allowing a better understanding on how to improve the learner-user's speaking proficiency.

Participation: Participation in this study is completely voluntary. The teacher is free to withdraw his/her consent, suspending participation effective immediately, at any time without justification or penalty.

Confidentiality: The study complies with the Portuguese data protection law. The data collected will be used for scientific research purposes only. Every participant teacher will be kept anonymous. No names or any other forms, direct or indirect, of identification will apply. The data is meant to be analysed as a whole, not individually.

Contact: Any questions and/or doubts related to the study should be addressed to its responsible – Rúben Constantino Correia, using the following email: ----------

---

I hereby declare to have understood the information supplied about the present study, thus consenting the use of my personal data in accordance with its aim and procedure.

_____

Date _____

Signature _____

Appendix F – Parents' Written Informed Consent

Declaração de Consentimento Informado

Estudo de Doutoramento Intitulado

"*Can We Speak? – Approaching Oral Proficiency in the EFL Classroom*"

Objetivo: O estudo tem por objetivo identificar as práticas atuais de promoção da oralidade por parte dos professores, bem como o uso da língua inglesa na sua modalidade oral por parte dos alunos. Isto, tendo por base o conceito de inteligibilidade.

Procedimento: O investigador irá assistir a uma aula da turma por semana, registando os aspetos considerados pertinentes para o estudo por escrito e em áudio.

Risco: Não há qualquer risco associado à participação neste estudo.

Benefício: A informação obtida vai contribuir para aumentar o conhecimento sobre o ensino/aprendizagem da oralidade em contexto de sala de aula, indo assim ao encontro das necessidades dos alunos.

Participação: A participação neste estudo é totalmente voluntária. O participante, ou o seu Encarregado de Educação, terá toda a liberdade para recusar a participação no estudo ou retirar o seu consentimento, suspendendo a respetiva participação a qualquer momento, sem nenhum tipo de penalização e sem ter de apresentar qualquer tipo de justificação.

Confidencialidade: O presente estudo está em conformidade com o Regulamento Geral de Proteção de Dados na sua versão mais recente (2019). Os dados obtidos serão tratados e utilizados exclusivamente com fins de investigação científica, garantindo-se o anonimato de cada um dos participantes. Não serão utilizados nomes e a informação recolhida será analisada no seu conjunto.

Contacto: Dúvidas ou questões relacionadas com este estudo devem ser colocadas ao seu responsável – Rúben Constantino Correia, através do seguinte email: ---------

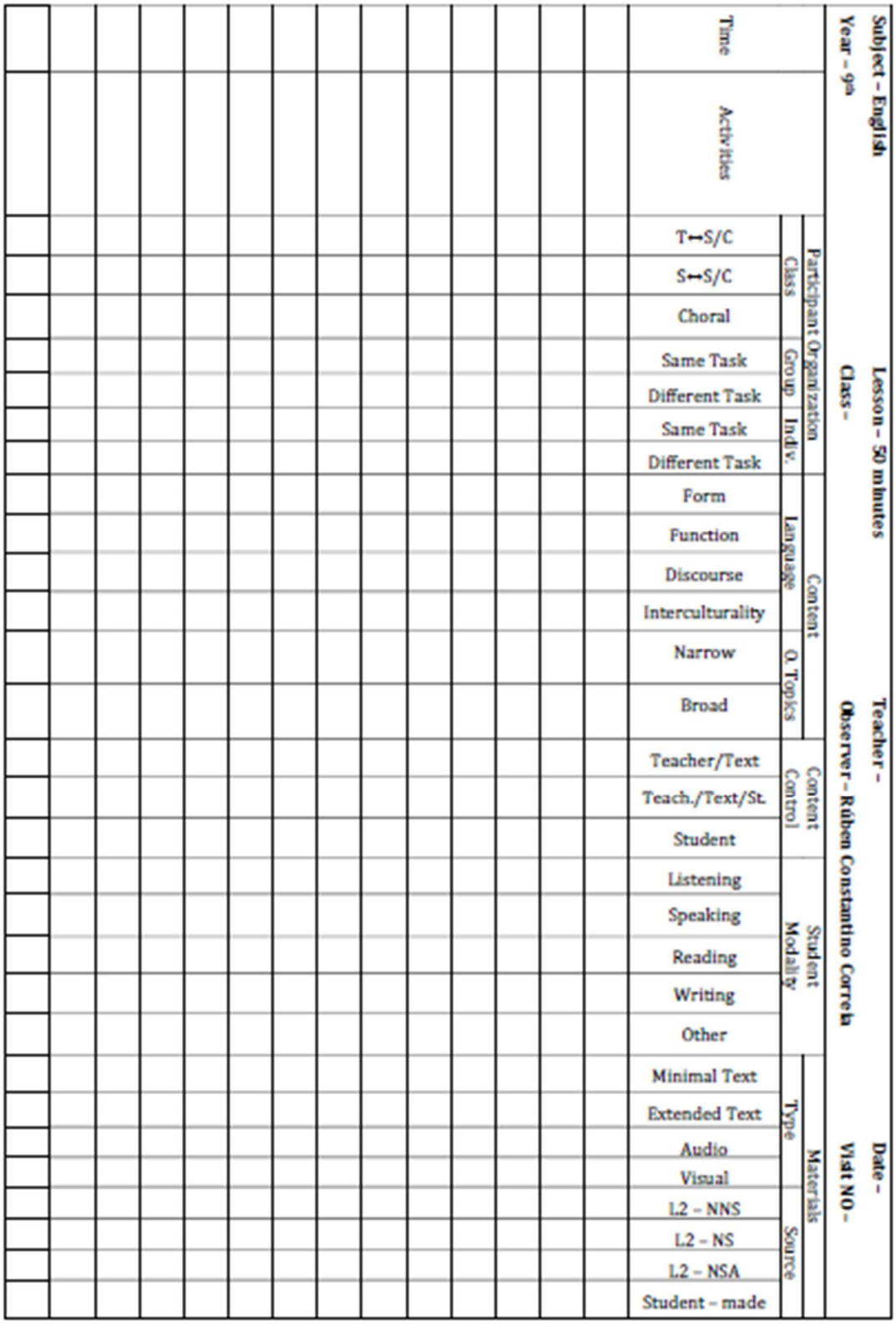
---

Declaro ter tomado conhecimento e entendido a informação fornecida acerca do presente estudo, aceitando assim a participação do meu educando.

_____

Data e Assinatura do Encarregado de Educação

Appendix G – COLT PT (Part A)



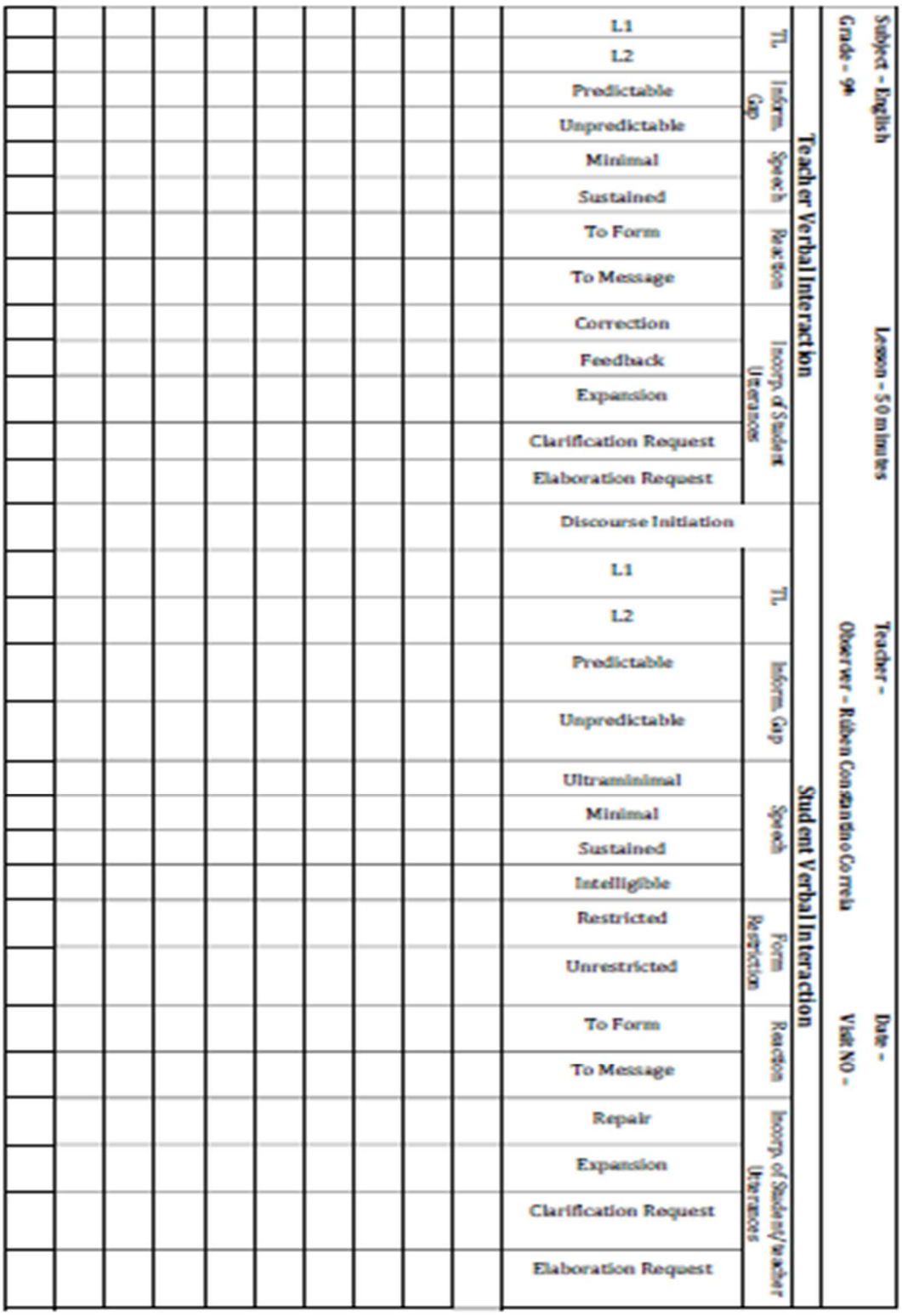
COLT PT – Part A

Subject – English | Lesson – 50 minutes | Teacher – | Date –

Year – 9ºª | Class – | Observer – Rúben Constantino Correia | Visit NO –

Time	Activities	Participant Organization			Content			Content Control		Student Modality						Materials	
		Class	Group	Indiv.	Language		O. Topics								Type		Source
		T↔S/C	Same Task	Different Task	Form	Function	Discourse	Interculturality	Narrow	Broad	Teacher/Text	Teach./Text/St.	Student	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Other	Minimal Text	Extended Text	Audio	Visual	L2 – NNS	L2 – NS	L2 – NSA	Student – made
		S↔S/C																								
		Choral																								

Appendix H – COLT PT (Part B)



COLT – Part B

Subject – English | Lesson – 50 minutes | Teacher – | Date –

Grade – 9th | Observer – Rúben Constantino Correia | Visit NO –

										L1	TL	Teacher Verbal Interaction
										L2		
										Predictable	Inform. Gap	
										Unpredictable		
										Minimal	Speech	
										Sustained		
										To Form	Reaction	
										To Message		
										Correction	Incorp. of Student Utterances	
										Feedback		
										Expansion		
										Clarification Request		
										Elaboration Request		
										Discourse Initiation		
										L1	TL	Student Verbal Interaction
										L2		
										Predictable	Inform. Gap	
										Unpredictable		
										Ultraminimal	Speech	
										Minimal		
										Sustained		
										Intelligible		
										Restricted	Form Restriction	
										Unrestricted		
										To Form	Reaction	
										To Message		
										Repair	Incorp. of Student/Teacher Utterances	
										Expansion		
										Clarification Request		
										Elaboration Request		

Appendix I – Teachers' Interview Guide

Interview Guide

1. Are you familiar with the new CEFR (2018)?
2. (If so) Are you familiar with its phonology descriptors?
3. How do you feel about intelligibility?
4. In your opinion, is it important to promote speaking in class? And within it pronunciation? Why?
5. On average, how many classes per term do you focus on speaking? Do you include pronunciation?
6. Is there an English variety you tend to follow in class? And is it the same you use outside the classroom?
7. Is the variety you follow in class the one you expect your students to follow?
8. What made you choose this one? Do you think it is the one they will need the most in their future lives?
9. Tell me about your students' use of English in class. Do you think it is adequate?
10. Could you tell me which materials you usually use for your speaking activities, including pronunciation?
11. Could you describe some of the activities you use?
12. In your opinion, what is the biggest challenge to approach speaking and pronunciation in the classroom?
13. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix J – Education Directorate-General Questionnaire Approval

Autorização de Inquérito em Meio Escolar

Exmo(a)s. Sr(a)s.

O pedido de autorização do inquérito n.º 0739500001, com a designação *Can We Speak? – Approaching Oral Proficiency in the EFL Classroom*, foi aprovado.

Avaliação do inquérito:

Exmo.(a) Senhor(a) Rúben Tiago Medronho Constantino Correia
Venho por este meio informar que o pedido de realização de inquérito em meio escolar é autorizado uma vez que, submetido a análise, cumpre os requisitos, devendo atender-se às observações aduzidas.
Com os melhores cumprimentos
José Vitor Pedroso
Diretor-Geral
DGE

Observações:

a) A realização dos Inquéritos fica sujeita a autorização das Direções dos Agrupamentos de Escolas do ensino público a contactar para a realização do estudo. Merece especial atenção o modo, o momento e condições de aplicação dos instrumentos de recolha de dados em meio escolar, porque onerosos, devendo fazer-se em estreita articulação com as Direções dos Agrupamento de Escolas.
b) De acordo com o Despacho nº 15847/2007, informa-se que a DGE não é competente para autorizar a realização de estudos/aplicação de inquéritos ou outros instrumentos em estabelecimentos de ensino privados e para autorizar a realização de intervenções educativas/desenvolvimento de projetos e atividades/programas de intervenção/formação, capacitação ou workshops em meio escolar, em tempo curricular, dadas as competências da Escola/Agrupamento, nos domínios da organização pedagógica, da organização curricular, da gestão estratégica, entre outras Os órgãos de gestão pedagógica e educativa, (a Direção, o Conselho Pedagógico e o Conselho Geral) melhor decidirão sobre a realização destas matérias.
c) Deve considerar-se o disposto legal em matéria de garantia de anonimato dos sujeitos, confidencialidade, proteção e segurança dos dados sensíveis e de vida privada a recolher e tratar no presente estudo. Tendo presente o princípio da minimização de dados e da indispensabilidade da sua recolha face aos objetivos e finalidades do estudo, não tornando identificáveis os sujeitos respondentes, devem ser adotadas as medidas necessárias em matéria de proteção e segurança, as adequadas e específicas para a defesa dos direitos fundamentais e dos interesses do titular dos dados. Deste modo, procura-se garantir o tratamento lícito dos mesmos, a conformidade com os termos procedimentais indicados e legislação em vigor. Sublinha-se que o

responsável pelo tratamento deverá, ainda, ponderar se, em função da natureza e âmbito do tratamento, é de considerar a realização de uma avaliação prévia do impacto sobre a proteção de dados (prevista no artigo 35.º do RGPD). O/a Encarregado/a de Proteção de Dados da entidade responsável pelo estudo é competente para responder às necessidades e apoiar todo o processo.

d) Dado que se considera a utilização de uma plataforma tecnológica para registo de dados, devem acautelar-se as questões colocadas pelos instrumentos de inquirição/registo devem ser respondidas apenas pelo destinatário pretendido (proceder-se à inquirição através de um único acesso - link da plataforma a utilizar - utilizando-se um ou mais computadores a disponibilizar para o efeito na escola - e não a utilização de dispositivos tecnológicos de e para uso pessoal - , ou outra forma considerada adequada àquele propósito). Em caso de ser instrumento de livre acesso, não é da competência da Direção-Geral da Educação (DGE) autorizar a sua aplicação, uma vez que qualquer pessoa pode responder.

Pode consultar na Internet toda a informação referente a este pedido no endereço http://mime.gepe.min-edu.pt. Para tal terá de se autenticar fornecendo os dados de acesso da entidade.

Appendix K – Teachers' Questionnaire

Teacher's Questionnaire

Introduction: Questionnaire addressed to 9th grade English teachers who have taught the subject during the 2019/2020 school year and/or the year before (2018/2019). Its purpose is to identify current teaching practices to approach speaking, as well as the students' oral use of the language, having intelligibility as yardstick. The information collected is confidential and anonymous, its use is merely statistical. Results will be discussed at conferences, seminars and in publications related to the teaching of English. There are no right or wrong answers. I would be grateful if you could respond as honestly as possible in accord with your own personal opinion.
Thank you for your time!
Rúben Constantino Correia

Questions: Section 1 – Background Data

- Gender: Feminine
  Masculine
- Age: up to 30
  In-between 30 and 40
  In-between 40 and 50
  In-between 50 and 60
  More than 60
- Level of Schooling: Undergraduate
  Postgraduate course
  Master's (pre-Bologna)
  Master's (post-Bologna)
  PhD
- Teaching Location: North
  Centre
  Lisbon
  Alentejo
  Algarve
  Azores
  Madeira
- Type of Affiliation: Docente Quadro de Agrupamento / Escola
  Docente Quadro de Zona Pedagógica
  Docente Contratado/a
- Recruitment group: 220
  330

Questions: Section 2 – Teaching Practice

- Are you familiar with the new volume of the CEFR (2018)?
  Yes
  No
- If so, how familiar are you with the new phonological descriptors?
  OBS: If not, move to the next question.

Unfamiliar
Little familiar
Familiar
Very familiar
Completely familiar

- How familiar are you with intelligibility?
  Unfamiliar
  Little familiar
  Familiar
  Very familiar
  Completely familiar
- In your opinion, how important is it to approach speaking in your teaching?
  Not important
  Little important
  Important
  Very important
  Imperative
- Thinking of speaking, how important is it to integrate pronunciation in your teaching?
  Not important
  Little important
  Important
  Very important
  Imperative
- Which variety of English do you use while teaching?
  British "RP"
  General American
  Canadian English
  Australian English
  South African English
  Other
- Which variety of English do you use when you are not teaching?
  British "RP"
  General American
  Canadian English
  Australian English
  South African English
  Other
- Which variety of English do you want your students to use while in class?
  British "RP"
  General American
  Canadian English
  Australian English
  South African English
  Other
- Do you think that the variety you want your students to use while in class is the one they will need for their academic and professional future?
  Yes

No

- Roughly, can you estimate the percentage of English used during class time by your students:
  1 - 10%
  11 - 20%
  21 - 40%
  41 - 60%
  61 - 80%
  81 - 100%
- On average, how many classes per term do you focus on speaking?
  0
  1 - 2 classes
  3 - 5 classes
  6 - 8 classes
  9 - 10 classes
  More than 10 classes
- On your speaking classes, can you estimate how much time do you allot to pronunciation:
  0
  1 - 5 minutes
  6 - 15 minutes
  16 - 30 minutes
  31 - 50 minutes
- Which materials do you usually fall back on to approach speaking and pronunciation with your students:
  Textbook
  Textbook's additional resources
  Other textbooks
  Flashcards
  Digital resources
  Language learning websites (e.g.: BBC Learning English)
  Other
- Which activities do you usually employ to practice speaking with your students:
  Pair / group work
  Oral presentations
  Role-plays
  Description tasks (e.g.: description of objects, places, etc.)
  Debates
  Fun activities (e.g.: guessing games)
  Other
- Which activities do you usually employ to practice pronunciation with your students:
  Oral input (explanation on how to position lips, tongue and jaw to pronounce words)
  Minimal pairs
  Tongue-twisters
  Listen and repeat

Dictation
Fun activities (e.g.: Chinese whispers)
Other

- For you, what are the biggest constraints to approach speaking and pronunciation:
  Lack of preparation / training on this domain
  Lack of proper resources
  Lack of time
  Lack of precise guidelines on official documents
  Difficulty in integrating speaking and pronunciation with the remaining skills
  There are not any
  Other

Appendix L – Teachers' Questionnaire Written Informed Consent

Declaração de Consentimento Informado

Estudo de Doutoramento Intitulado

"*Can We Speak? – Approaching Oral Proficiency in the EFL Classroom*"

Finalidade: O tratamento dos dados requeridos tem por objetivo identificar as práticas atuais de promoção da oralidade por parte dos professores, bem como o uso da língua inglesa na sua modalidade oral por parte dos alunos. Isto, tendo por base o conceito de inteligibilidade. Com esta finalidade, a licitude do tratamento dos dados tem como fundamento jurídico o consentimento do seu titular.

Procedimento: Os dados requeridos são fornecidos pelo seu titular através de resposta anónima a um questionário online (googleforms) criado especificamente para esse efeito. De forma a aumentar a segurança da informação prestada, será disponibilizado um só link de acesso ao questionário, por tempo determinado. A categoria de dados recolhidos é de natureza socioprofissional, com especial foco na prática letiva, de acordo com a finalidade do estudo, não havendo lugar a comunicações, interconexões, transferências e reutilizações dos dados do titular.

Risco: Não há qualquer risco associado à participação neste estudo para o titular dos dados – físico, material e imaterial.

Benefício: A informação obtida vai contribuir para aumentar o conhecimento sobre o ensino/aprendizagem da oralidade em contexto de sala de aula, indo assim ao encontro das necessidades dos alunos.

Participação: A participação neste estudo é totalmente voluntária. O professor respondente, terá toda a liberdade para recusar a participação no estudo ou retirar o seu consentimento de tratamento de dados, suspendendo a respetiva participação a qualquer momento, sem nenhum tipo de penalização e sem ter de apresentar qualquer tipo de justificação. Tem igualmente o direito de solicitar acesso aos dados que lhe digam respeito, bem como à sua retificação, apagamento, limitação e/ou oposição de tratamento e portabilidade. Tem ainda o direito de apresentar reclamação a uma autoridade de controlo.

Confidencialidade: O presente estudo está em conformidade com o Regulamento Geral de Proteção de Dados na sua versão mais recente (2019). Os dados obtidos

serão tratados e utilizados exclusivamente com fins de investigação científica, de acordo com a finalidade do estudo, garantindo-se o anonimato de cada um dos participantes. Não são pedidos nomes nem outros elementos que permitam, direta ou indiretamente, a identificação do titular dos dados e a informação recolhida será analisada no seu conjunto, aplicando-se como princípios da proteção de dados os da minimização e anonimização. Sublinha-se ainda que os dados serão conservados por igual período ao da sua análise. Finda esta análise, todos os dados recolhidos, bem como o questionário online que a eles conduziu, serão eliminados.

Contacto: Dúvidas ou questões relacionadas com este estudo devem ser colocadas ao responsável pelo tratamento dos dados – Doutorando Rúben Constantino Correia através do seguinte email: ----------. Adicionalmente poderão ser igualmente contactados o Orientador do responsável pelo tratamento dos dados – Professor Doutor ---------- e o Encarregado de Proteção de Dados da instituição de Ensino Superior respetiva – ----------.

Declaro ter tomado conhecimento e entendido a informação fornecida acerca do presente estudo, consentindo assim o tratamento de dados que resulta da minha participação.

_____

Assinatura _____

Appendix M – Teachers' Questionnaire Informative Note

Nota Informativa

Estudo de Doutoramento Intitulado

"*Can We Speak? – Approaching Oral Proficiency in the EFL Classroom*"

Em cumprimento com o previsto no **artigo 13º** da Secção 2, Capítulo III, do Regulamento Geral da Proteção de Dados, facultam-se a seguintes informações aos professores respondentes:

a) Responsável pelo tratamento dos dados – Doutorando Rúben Constantino Correia. Contacto: rubentmc@hotmail.com ;
b) Contacto do Encarregado de Proteção de Dados da instituição de Ensino Superior respetiva – dpo@unl.pt ;
c) O tratamento dos dados requeridos tem por objetivo identificar as práticas atuais de promoção da oralidade por parte dos professores, bem como o uso da língua inglesa na sua modalidade oral por parte dos alunos. Isto, tendo por base o conceito de inteligibilidade. Com esta finalidade, a licitude do tratamento dos dados tem como fundamento jurídico o consentimento do seu titular;
d) Não haverá transferência dos dados para um país terceiro, dentro ou fora da União Europeia, nem para qualquer organização internacional;
e) Os dados serão conservados por igual período ao da sua análise. Finda esta análise, todos os dados recolhidos, bem como o questionário online que a eles conduziu, serão eliminados;
f) O titular dos dados tem o direito de solicitar acesso aos dados que lhe digam respeito, bem como à sua retificação, apagamento, limitação e/ou oposição de tratamento e portabilidade;
g) O titular dos dados tem ainda o direito de apresentar reclamação a uma autoridade de controlo.